

JERSEY BEAT

\$2 No. 49

Welcome To
~~Seattle~~
NEW
JERSEY

A State Of The State Report

New Brunswick Vs. Hoboken
Which Scene Is Cooler?

New Bands

Scene Reports

Reviews & Photos



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hectic thinking E.P.

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JERSEY BEAT

418 GREGORY AVE WEEHAWKEN NJ 07087

Issue No. 49 Summer, 1993

Welcome to Issue #49 of Jersey Beat, the fanzine that goes where Sassy fears to tread. This is a special issue devoted to the current state of the "scene" in New Jersey. I have no idea what we'll be doing in #50, but expect it sometime around late September or early October, 1993. I am desperately looking for punk-rock artists who would like to contribute a few scribbles to this publication. If you can draw and would like to get published in a really, really cool fanzine, please write! In the meantime, please drop us a line and tell us what you think of this issue, and keep those cards, letters, CD's, free promotional t-shirts, and any spare Lollapalooza tickets coming.

ON THE COVER: Mars Needs Women rocks New Brunswick's coolest club, the Court Tavern.

Our glossy cover is on summer vacation and may return in the Fall if enough of you buy this issue.

Jersey Beat needs artists, writers, and photographers. If you'd like to help out, get in touch!



Reviewing Policy

We listen to everything that comes in, with special preference given to local bands from our regional area and independent releases. Because of the sheer volume of discs, cassettes, and records that we receive, it's impossible to review them all, but we do the best we can. We understand if you're a publicist or small label that you have to call and track your releases, and we cooperate all we can, but longdistance calls to the West Coast will probably not be returned at our expense just to tell you that we got that package you mailed us last week. We do not release material received on cassette if it is available on compact disc or vinyl; we do, however, review and welcome cassette-only releases and demo tapes. If we review it, and you sent us your address, you will get a tearsheet. Promise.



From The Editor's Desk

I can tell you exactly when I thought of how to do this issue. It was during NYU's Independent Music Festival. I was walking down W. 3rd Street with a couple of friends, on our way to a show in the East Village, and this whole indie/major label thing started swimming in front of my eyes. "What if we did a whole issue with nothing but unsigned bands?" I thought. "And what if all those bands came from New Jersey?" Back to basics. Back to our *roots*. After all, when Jersey Beat started, that was the whole idea -- write about all these cool bands that everyone else was ignoring, bands like Adrenalin O.D. and the Bongos.

So here you have it. The issue isn't 100% indie - there are still major label record reviews. Because I don't care how punk rock you are, you can't tell me there aren't good albums coming out on Sire and Reprise and Atlantic, not with great bands like the Poster Children, Eleventh Dream Day, the Goo Goo Dolls and so on all signed to majors.

And anyway, just because you're on a major label doesn't mean you're going to be rich and famous. Last issue's coverboys Quicksand are, as I write this, looking at a major flop as far as their Polygram album *Slip* goes. They could have sold more copies on Revelation, the way things have gone so far. Of course, in the past few years there have been plenty of albums that sat on the shelves for over a year before they began to sell; just look at the (yuk) Spin Doctors. And the issue before Quicksand we wrote about the Sweet Lizard Illtet, the great white funky hope of Hoboken, and their album on an even bigger label did even worse. (And as long as we're on the subject of the Jersey Beat curse, Ultra Vivid Scene from issue #39 was just dropped by Columbia.)

Well, enough about that. I would love to get some letters this time about what you think about this issue -- do you like reading about a lot of bands you've

probably never heard of before, or should we go back to writing about all the Pick Hits Of The Week from CMJ and the Gavin Report? It occurs to me that next issue is #50. That's a big one. So we'll probably do something completely different anyway. I'm sure you'll be surprised at what we come up with.

I know I will.

- Jim Testa, June, 1993

Hoboken Vs. New Brunswick A Comparative Analysis

	Hoboken	New Brunswick
Cool record stores	1	7
Rock clubs	3	4
Avg. number of musicians (per capita)	1.25	16.75
Odds of finding parking	.02%	42%
Odds of having sex after gig	4%	28%
Fanzines	1	6
Pizzerias (per sq. block)	2	.2
Avg. number of major label A&R men per gig	4	0
Local bands signed to major labels	2	2
Odds of police busting noise parties	66%	24%
Yuppies (per capita)	50	4
Avg. monthly rent	\$550	\$320

Hoboken clearly retains the edge in fast food, with more pizzerias and more takeout Chinese restaurants (a category we didn't even count.) Each scene has produced two major label bands: Sweet Lizard Illtet and Madder Rose from Hoboken, the Smithereens and Nudeswirl from New Brunswick, although the Smithereens' two Gold records clearly make New Brunswick the winner in potential commercial appeal. In all important lifestyle categories, however, New Brunswick emerges as the much cooler place to live today.

Editor-in-Chief

Jim Testa

Columnists

Metal - Hayley Greff; Techno - Mick Hale;

Cassettes - Rodney Leighton

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Tom Angelli, Tom Brebric, Bob Byrne,

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Ted Cogswell, Matt Gard, Joseph Gervasi,

Sean Gustilo, Jason Jeneric, Elaine

Nichols, Al Barkley

by Jim Testa

Publicists call me all the time to check up on their latest releases and ask me about doing stories. Some publicists are cool, some are a pain in the neck, but I've never met one before hanging out at ABC No Rio. So when Artie Shepherd of Mind Over Matter introduced himself at a show as the "Arthur" who called me frequently from one of the big independent publicity agencies in New York, I was intrigued. A few weeks later, I had a chance to see his band for the first time, and I was blown

away. Mind Over Matter may be part of Long Island's "Old School" hardcore scene, but they add a lot to the genre - powerful songs full of tempo changes and different riffs, a hard but not-metal guitar sound, and passionate emo vocals that owe more to the D.C. school than the old school.

A few weeks later, Mind Over Matter played a show at ABC No Rio and we talked beforehand inside their trusty if somewhat dilapidated van...

Q: Why doesn't everyone introduce

themselves first?

Scott: I play bass.

George: I sing.

Artie: I play guitar.

John: I play drums.

Q: I remember Scott from the Bond Street show. There were these three really drunk girls there yelling "Scott is hot."

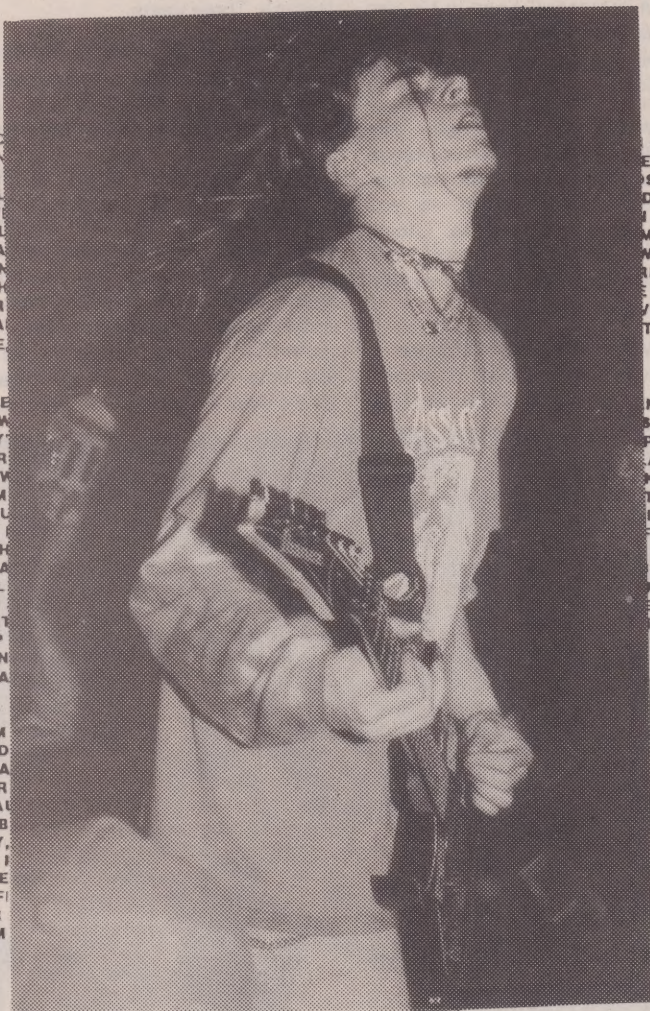
Artie: He gets embarrassed but he has groupies all over the place. When we

Positive Negativity With A Smile

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MINDOVERMATTER

play out on Long Island, we're often referred to as "The New Kids On The Block of hardcore." (laughs)

Q: I don't know, for cute guys your music is really gloomy and serious.

Artie: Gloomy??

George: Hey, I write the lyrics, and they are gloomy.

Q: I would think the overriding emotion for a band like yours trying to play out in New York is frustration. It's got to be really frustrating on a lot of different levels trying to be a band here.

Artie: Yes, it's very frustrating. We play all over the East Coast, and although we've had the first 7-inch out for a while, people still don't know who we are.

George: It's just really hard for our label to get us distributed. If you don't have a big name, the stores don't want to take a chance on carrying your 7 inch.

Artie: Here in New York, on Long Island we're popular. In the city, we do okay. But you start going out of town and it's rough. But from Europe, we hear all this stuff about how everybody loves us, we sell so many records, blah blah blah. But it's like, we're not there. It doesn't do us any good. So yeah, definitely, it's pretty frustrating

right now.

Q: Well, the term "New York Hardcore" still means something in Europe. I get the feeling that it's not that big a deal in this country anymore. People are more into the East Bay thing or D.C.

Artie: Nah, you're right.

George: It's frustrating picking that label up, just being a hardcore band. As much as you can rely being in a hardcore band and playing hardcore shows, it's hard to break out of that. You say hardcore and people think three-chord mosh parts. If you want to do more than that with your music, than you might be more than just a hardcore band, but you still get stuck with the label. That's frustrating.

Q: Being a "hardcore" band in NY also imposes an immediate set of limits on you - where you can play, who'll come to your shows...

Artie: Exactly. We don't really like being thought of as a hardcore band, but we are part of the scene and part of everything that goes on, so you gotta be there. And besides, I think hardcore is such a broad term now. There's no particular music involved that goes with it anymore.

George: When you say hardcore, it means something different to everybody. When you say you're a hardcore

band, you could be this or you could be that...

Scott: Are you Garden Variety or Mind Over Matter? Or Green Day or Helmet? It's so broad now.

Q: But your songs aren't standard hardcore songs anyway, the three fast chords with a slow mosh part in the middle kind of thing. In fact, some of your songs seem to go on forever, with lots of different parts. (laughter)

Artie: We go out of our way, I know I do when I write songs, to make every song different. Because I get tired of seeing some bands where every song sounds the same. It gets real boring. Plus, we've been playing together for so long...

George: Three years.

Artie: Yeah, three years, so by now it's second nature for us to bring a song in and somebody adds this and somebody else adds that. It just happens.

George: We all came out of seeing bands and shows. I used to go to CBGB every Sunday and I've seen so many bands, I can't remember them. After a while it was like seeing the same band every week. There are some bands I remember, like I can remember seeing Yuppicide for the first time. They were really different. That's what I want for us. I want people



to know that we were here. I want them to remember us as something they saw that was special and different from all the other hardcore bands around. I don't want to just come out on stage and go, Okay, you're gonna mosh now. That's not what I want it to be.

Q: Wouldn't you say that the overall message of your songs is pretty negative? It seemed that way to me listening to the new EP.

Artie: You gotta talk to George about that. He writes the lyrics.

George: Originally, I started writing things that I thought I wanted to say. I wanna get this point across. But then, when I was writing more and more, I realized that I would just write things that came out, just feelings and things that were on my mind, more than some point I felt I had to make. So even if it is negative, if you can relate a negative message to someone who's feeling the same things, it ultimately is a release for you and that person. Then it becomes a positive message, almost.

Artie: It's funny that we get the negative thing, because we're the happiest bunch of guys. I saw an ad in Maximum Rock N Roll that was so funny, it was like, "Looking for new hatecore, into Mind Over Matter." I wanted to write a letter to the kid, tell him we're not hatecore.

George: It's strange, because if you just picked up the record and heard the songs, you'd probably think that about us. But on stage and everything, we're not this miserable, angry band or anything.

Scott: The songs aren't all negative to me. I guess it's just how you look at it. I think "Forbidden Fruit," especially, is very positive. And also "Too Much."

George: I lot of things I write, also, are very tongue in cheek, at least to me, but I guess it comes out that I'm really meaning that.

Q: The tone is really angry too.

George: I guess when it's heavy, it sounds negative. That's just the way it goes.

Artie: If we were emo, you'd think we were positive.

George: We get asked that a lot because of our name. It seems like we're a posi-core band.

Artie: A posi-straightedge band. A lot of people think we're straightedge too. We're not.

Q: I wanted to ask Artie too about what it's like working in the music industry. Most of the time you're this punk rocker and then one day a week you turn into this corporate hack who calls me up and bothers me about the new cassette you sent out that week. (everybody laughs)

Artie: It's kind of weird for me. It's gotten us a little different attention from different people other than hardcore people. Which is cool. But I've witnessed so much of what goes on in the corporate world, it's really strange. It's cool in some respects, and it gets cheeseey in others. It's hard to say, exactly, what it's all about. But, like, it got us a review in CMJ, which was cool. And you're doing this interview now, and you wouldn't know me if I didn't work there. So it does have its advantages. But *corporate hack*? C'mon! (laughs)

Q: But does it ever get frustrating in that, you're there on the inside of the music business, but you know that because you're in a "hardcore band," a lot of those people are never going to take you seriously, no matter how good you are?

Artie: It's frustrating in that sense, but I think a lot of people are taking hardcore bands much more seriously. It's weird how much it's opened up now. Every hardcore band is getting offers. I don't know too many bands who aren't talking to labels. I was talking to Al Quint up in Boston and he said the same thing, that it's getting ridiculous. And I said, yeah, it is, but I don't know how to react to it. It's cool that the music is opening up and other people are getting to see it, but on the other hand, it's not what hardcore is supposed to be about.

Scott: It's really prostituting the music. No one's gonna fool themselves and say they're trying to help the band out. They're just trying to capitalize on a trend and make money for themselves. If we were going to get signed, well, you have to just admit it.

Artie: You just say, this is the next step. Are we gonna take it? You have to make that choice. You can't make excuses. Like Quicksand, I've read so many reviews that said Quicksand is just a major label Fugazi, and in some ways, maybe they are. But their music is original and I think they still have the same ideals.

George: And poor Walter. I mean, what's he supposed to do, play in fucking Youth Of Today and Warzone until he's 40 years old? Give the guy a break. He's paid a lot of dues, he deserves something back.

Q: That's why I did the cover story on them last issue. I feel the same way. But it's a complicated subject. Like, right now from what I understand, Green Day is in the middle of a major label bidding war. They were supposed to sign to Geffen, then Columbia started wooing them. I don't know how I feel about that. They've been such a big part of the East Bay DIY scene...

George: I think we all have different opinions on that too. It would really

'A complete & utter aggressive release. For us, anyway. You can take hardcore anywhere you fucking want' - Artie

have to depend on where we were at and how far we really wanted to go with this. It's a big decision. You could really lose yourself, and lose your band. Or you could have the greatest thing you've ever had.

Artie: We got lucky when we got signed to Wreck-Age. They saw us once, we sent them our demo, that was it. And they're a really good label.

Q: It's so hard getting shows in NY, where do you play?

Artie: We play almost every weekend out of state and it gets rough. You drive for hours and then do a show for five people, or find out the whole thing was cancelled. But we've won so many people over out of state, even if it's only 20 people at a time.

Q: Where's the best place to go?

Artie: Portland, Maine.

George: Plattsburg... The best places are towns where a lot of hardcore bands don't come through, but there are a lot of kids into it.

Artie: That's the best. Those kids are so psyched. And they see like one show a month.

George: We played in Maine once, and we came back two months later, and we were the next show. No one else had been there.

Q: So what does the NY hardcore scene mean to you today?

Artie: It's a lot better than a few years ago. When we started, we were playing out for two years and it was totally dead. We were playing for like twenty people every show. And now, I think it means a lot of young kids, which is cool. A lot of new kids in the scene.

George: I'm almost afraid to say what it means to me. I think the whole Do-it-Yourself thing is dying. I'm not into hardcore to try and control a bunch of emotionally disturbed kids. And I don't want to have to tell them,

you can't drink or smoke, I don't want to do that at all.

John: I don't know why you'd want to do that anyway. What it means to me is that it's something that saves me.

Artie: A complete and utter aggressive release. For us, anyway. Anybody can take it anywhere they fucking want.

Q: How about out of town? Do you run into certain expectations because you're a "New York" band?

Artie: People usually think we're going to be a mosh band. Then we start playing and they're like, what the hell is this? But it's funny, when you leave New York, you find so many other bands that sound like New York bands. Then we come along and sound different, and people think it's really cool.

George: People see "New York" on the flyer and, I don't know if I'd say they're disappointed in us, but they expect us to come out in Syracuse shirts and baseball caps.

Artie: A lot of scenes are a couple of years behind out there. But that's cool.

Q: And then there's Europe.

Artie: Oh, they're like ten years behind.

Q: Over there, it's like 1986. They're gonna expect you to come out in hooded sweatshirts and jump around a lot.

Artie: And we're not going for another year. With our luck, we'll never get there. Hardcore's gonna die, or there'll be World War III. With our luck, we'll never get there.

Q: Okay, any closing comments?

Artie: Buy our record, please.

George: Go to as many shows as you can. Support local bands.

Artie: Buy my fanzine. It's got a lot of crap about the Long Island scene. And give us all a hug when you see us.

To write Mind Over Matter for information on their records, booking, or Artie's fanzine, write Mind Over Matter, PO Box 184, Babylon, NY 11702.

DUMBROCK

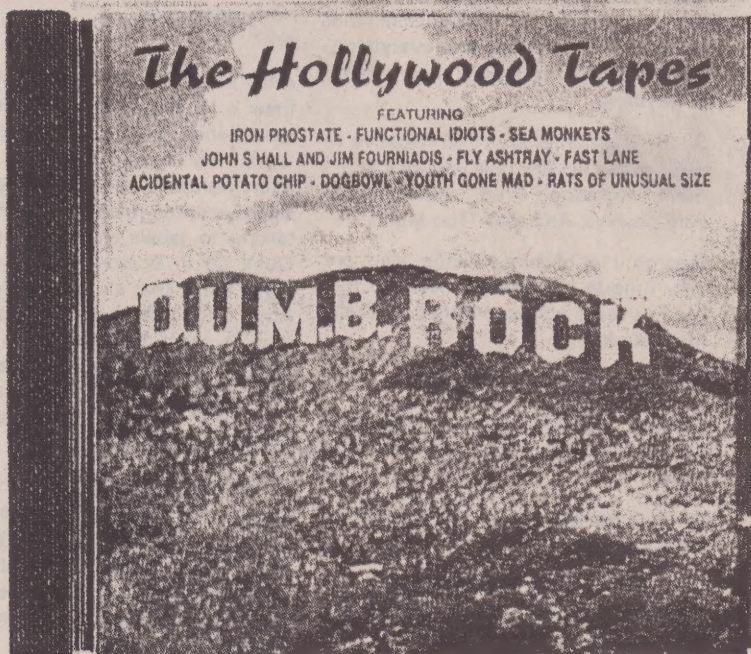
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Not to sound overly territorial or anything, but for years now, I've kept myself up at night thinking about all those rotten, spoiled creeps in other towns across America having great fun all the time, going to see MY favorite bands every night of the week, just because those bands live in those towns. So how is it that New York (Astoria, Queens, no less - spitting distance from my house) has managed to produce possibly the best melodic hardcore/dashes-of-everything-else band in the entire world? Ah, but why jinx it by asking stupid questions? All I know is that they've got unbelievably great songs with strong, positive lyrics, they are a phenomenal live band, and they're nice guys. They've managed to reduce all sorts of audience members into raving loons (Hello, Flipside!) yet they still don't seem to grasp the fact that they're on the way to conquering the world. Somehow, though, I'm convinced they only exist to make my life suck less.

Black Train Jack is Rob on vocals, Ernie on guitar, Brian on bass, and Nick on drums.

I met with Brian & Nick for a conversation punctuated by roaring engines and boomin' boomboxes in the decidedly unpunk surroundings of Astoria Park. Here, then, is an introduction to the joys of Black Train Jack. A primer, if you will...

The Secret Origin

Brian: Ernie and I were in geology class together in college, right after Token Entry broke up. Ernie still really wanted to play and he was kind of depressed after Token Entry broke up, and I was too. (Ernie was the drummer in that band, Brian and Rob were roadies.) So we had this thing, the name of it, we thought of Lungfish, because we thought no one would ever think of such a horrible name like that. And we were going for a while, it was me and Ernie, we got Rob, Tim from Token Entry was playing drums, we just

practiced, essentially. Then Tim went his own way, Ernie knew Nick from Astoria. We got him, we started practicing, and that was it. (Except there was already a band from Baltimore, with a record out, called Lungfish. Enter Black Train Jack.)

The Name

Nick: The name came from the Rollins song, "Wreck-Age." Brian: We were in my car, turning into Ernie's driveway, listening to that song, and he said that line. Ernie stopped the tape deck and he said, "What a cool name for a band." And I was like, "Yeah, it is pretty cool."

Writing Those Excellent Songs

Nick: Basically, Ernie comes up with mostly everything, the guitar line, the melody and the lyrics. Rob writes a few lyrics himself but it's mainly Ernie. He'll come into the studio and then me and Brian lay down the groundwork for the rest of the song. He'll come in and go, "Yeah, I want this type of feel, or something like this" and he'll come up with something, and I'll come up with something, and we'll keep on working it, sweating it out. Maybe play it at a show, see how it goes over live. Real simple process. We're just real happy that we've got someone like Ernie because he's already now...our first album isn't even released yet and we've got three songs for a second album already, so his brain is working O.T. all the time, which is great.

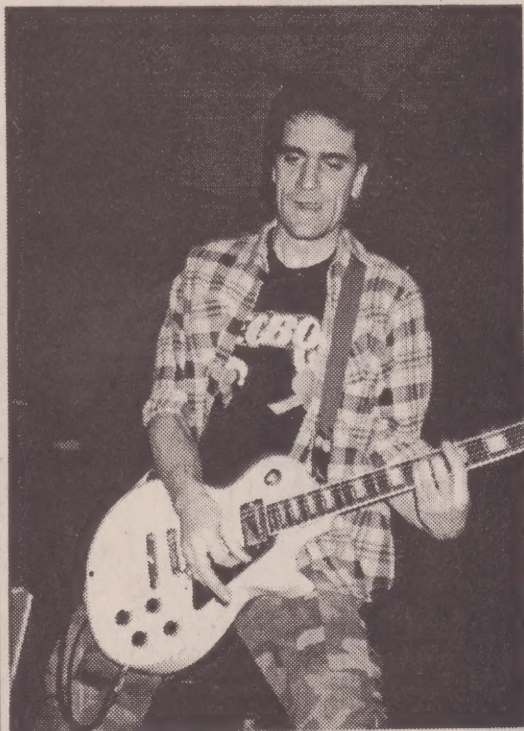
"Someday"

The clash, the crash/of an aluminum chair against a human skull/ Something I won't soon forget

Nick: We played an Animal Rights benefit in Pottstown, PA. Fifteen to 20 bands were playing, including Into Another. We happened to be in

BLACK TRAIN JACK

**The excellent
sound of an
aluminum chair
crashing against a
human skull
By Bill Lutz**



ERNIE



The band that gnoshes together, moshes together

the last bunch of bands with them, and before we went on, there happened to be a big rumble, white power guys. These guys came in with two-by-fours, you name, there was blood spilled everywhere, it just turned into a fiasco. Basically, the song is about what we saw. People were getting hit over the head with chairs, there was blood, man, it was horrible, horrible. [The song is] just a positive response to the negativity and how it shouldn't be.

The New York Scene, 1993

Nick: We're happy that the scene in general seems to be picking up a bit. There's some real good bands. Quick-

sand's really happening, Into Another, Lunachicks, D-Generation... Brian: Bad Brains are back.

Nick: ...Outcrowd, bands like that. These bands seem to be binding together, which is cool. I think people went away from that for a while. It's cool, everybody's supporting one another and people look forward to seeing a bill with these bands together. It's strengthening up a little, getting a little shot of B-12, so to speak.

Brian: And New York is not as violent as everyone make it out to be, and hopefully that's going to go awa.

Etc. (Random Excerpts)

Brian: For the record, we played 7 Seconds in basketball by City Gardens and we killed them. Completely killed them! Nick: We're

healthy guys.

Brian: We're not big crazy bikers, but we all ride motorcycles, and Rob has this big canary yellow Cadillac. Nick: I used to work with the cover guy from the last issue of Jersey Beat (Walter from Quicksand) at Waldbaum's. Brian: Just for the record, we have nothing to do with any of the people who are hanging out in this park.

Black Train Jack's debut album, No Reward, on Roadrunner Records, is due out in July. You can write to the band at PO Box 70-1340, Flushing NY 11370.

BAD RELIGION

RECIPE FOR HATE



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by Jodi Shapiro

Okay, you've seen the name in ads for Under Acme, CBGB, and Tilt, and your interest was piqued. It wasn't? Well, that's your problem then. I mean, do you have to be told something is "hip" and "cool" for you to like it? Or do you only do grunge bands?

Sons Of Elvis aren't a grunge band, even though they occasionally dress like one. Bobby Brady-esque striped t-shirts, Chuck Taylors and frayed jeans are the usual, topped with unruly mops of curly hair (except for the singer.) "That's sheer coincidence," says Dave Hill, the bassist, dejectedly. "Some guy once offered me five bucks for my Mardi Gras beads because he said they were so hip. He didn't say they were grungy, but he might as well have."

If Ween can get a *Sassy* Cute Band Alert, so can the Sons. The blurb might read something like this...

They've all got that dreamboat-in-your-biology class quality, and they just want to rock and roll. Pat Casa (drums) and Tim Parnin (guitar) are just two of the millions in the ranks of Z-Rock's Metal Militia ("You just can't deny the power of metal," says Pat.) Bassist Dave Hill is a freelance writer/illustrator and lead singer John Borland has "a really un-rock 'n roll job."

Pat: Z-Rock is great. I was listening today and some guy called in and said, "It's so hot today, can you play 'Ice Cream Man' by Van Halen?"

Tim: Did they play it?

Pat: Of course! The DJ said, "Now there's a good idea!"

Sitting on the floor of Pat & Tim's bachelor pad, eating fried half-chickens from the Chinese takeout joint across the street ("Half-chickens are the official food of Sons Of Elvis," says Pat. "We should just run a clothesline down to their kitchen and send them orders.") we start talking. John doesn't join us because he's out seeing Tom Jones at the Limelight.

Tim: We're missing Tom Jones for this, you know.

Jodi: Yecch.

The Sons are secretive about their art, but promises of cheap beer (preferably 40 ounces of St. Ides) and nude photos of Lita Ford make them spill their guts.

Q: If you were to place a personal ad in the Village Voice, what would it say?

Dave: Mine would say, "Pat, call me."

Tim: Amputee.

Dave (laughing): No allergies to rubber. Gloves.

Pat: I saw the best one once: "No dreamers."

Tim: Do you want the best in life? Then call me.

Dave: Bigger is better.

Pat: English not necessary, but you must speak the language of love.

Q: You guys are such rock gods, there must be a lot of groupie action.

Dave: Yeah, people take their clothes off at our shows.

[More on this later.]

None of them know how to describe their music, so I'll offer some points of reference: Replacements. Prince. Funkadelic. Royal Crescent Mob. Every garage/basement band ever. Aerosmith. The sound of fun. The stuff they isn't the most original, I'll admit (they will too,) but what sets the Sons Of Elvis apart from the pack is the incredibly great songs they write.

Pat: We did the cover band thing for a while. Replacements, Zeppelin.

The Sons Of Elvis

Pure Sex In Blue Jeans

(But They Put Them On One Leg At A Time)

Dave: Allman Brothers.

Q: How'd you get your name?

Pat: Well, the lead singer was named Coverdale, and the guitarist's name was Page, so it just seemed natural to call it Coverdale Page.

Dave: It was a mistake, but it's too late now.

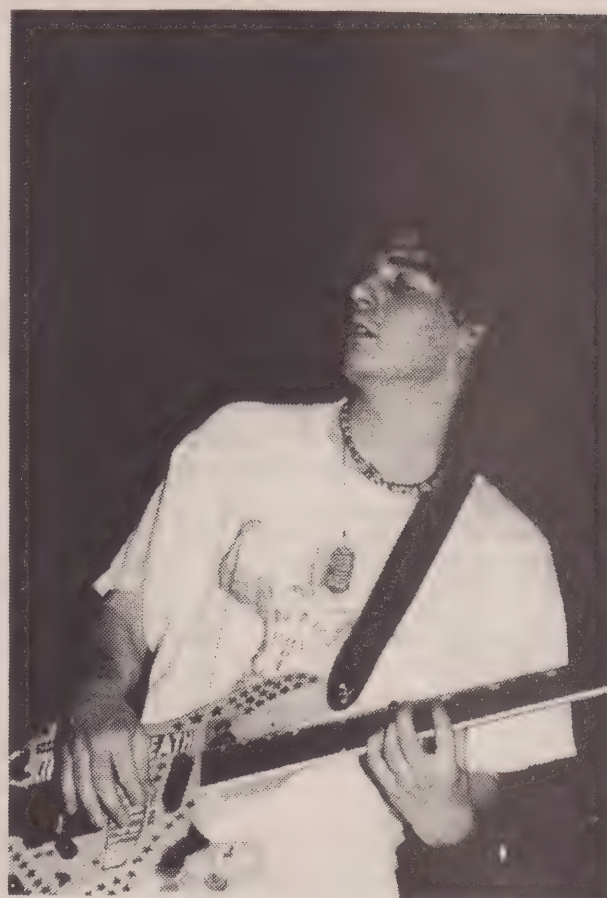
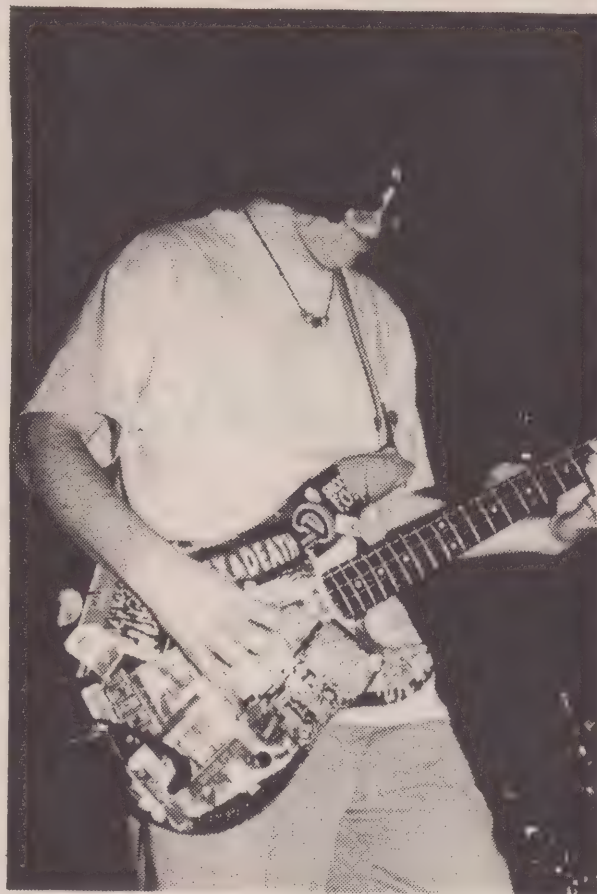
Q: You can always change it, there aren't any t-shirts yet.

Dave: The reason we don't have t-shirts is because we're always thinking that we're gonna change our name. Now we can't because we're so massively popular.

Even though you can't really hear it in their music, all four Sons Of Elvis have an enormous admiration for James Brown, Barry White, George Clinton, and Bootsy Collins.

Q: How big an influence are James Brown and Barry White?

Pat: If you have to pick one thing, it's gotta be love. Everybody should learn something from Barry. He's so awesome! Every single song he sings is about love. And



Girls, who do you love more? Dave (l.), the cuddly bassist, or Tim, the hunky guitarist?

James, well, what can I say? Just look at him! (points to a James Brown album jacket hanging on the wall)

Q: Tell us about the appeal of Metal with a capital M.

Tim: We like metal. In high school, that was all we listened to.

Dave: There's nothing better than going to an arena metal show.

Tim: Metal is the common bond.

Dave: Metal is the great equalizer. It doesn't matter what kind of car you drive. With metal, you're entertained wherever you go. You can go to the bathroom and be entertained. Whatever testosterone a guy has, it all comes out at a metal show. No matter if you're a fat girl or a skinny girl, they call wear tight spandex clothes.

If you happen to catch a Sons Of Elvis show, you'll probably see my next door neighbors Mike and Thad dancing in their underwear. This is part of a long tradition at Sons shows, along with a guy in a Batman costume. Thad has this to say about his role in Sons lore: "It's not something you explain, it's just something you do."

Dave: We don't know who that Batman guy is.

Tim: He shows up, watches us play, then flies back to the

Batcave.

Q: And then there are the male strippers.

Tim: Yeah, Mike and Thad. Two fellow Clevelanders.

Q: If you were a character on 90210, who would you be?

Tim: Dylan, I guess. Dylan is God. He's got a Strat in his bedroom.

Dave: I want to do a cameo. I want to be the guy that transfers into the school for one episode, but halfway through they figure out I'm a psycho, I've been kicked out of every school. At the end my parents come and say, "This has happened to Dave before, that's why we had to leave South Dakota."

Pat: I want to be the kid that tries pot for the first time. I'll be up on the roof saying "I can fly!" and then fall off! They had that on the White Shadow once (a mid-70's show about a h.s. basketball coach.)

What does any of this have to do with music? I have no idea. If you want to know what their music sounds like, just go to one of their shows. Or buy one of their tapes. Sons Of Elvis World HQ, 1777 First Ave. Apt. 3-S, New York NY 10128.

AUSTIN, TEXAS - All I can remember is four days of Mexican food, Shiner Bock beer, and loud music. There was a softball game in there somewhere, and I vaguely recall sitting in this big concrete bunker listening to a lot of

much fun, I didn't bother taking a lot of notes. But here's some of what I remember...

There was a press panel - there's always a press panel at these things - and this one was called "Is Rock

subscribe to Sassy last year "because I no longer know any teenagers." Ann Richards, the Governor of Texas, gave the keynote address, and told everyone they oughta leave New York and L.A. and move to Austin, because

SXSW'93 Music Festival

Photos and text by Jim Testa

funny people with really small heads natter on about something or other. It's no coincidence that Roky Erickson and the Butthole Surfers both come from Austin. South By Southwest, the annual musicfest, barbecue, and industry convention, just ain't the same as the New Music Seminar, no matter how you slice it. We're not on Broadway anymore, Toto. Anybody see the Pepto Bismal?

The problem with most of these music business conventions like NMS or CMJ is that they're too goddamn much like, well, business conventions. Lots of guys in cheaps suits making deals and taking each other out to dinner on the old corporate credit card. At SXSW, people actually talk about music. In fact, that's about all anybody talked about the whole time I was there. The problem is that I had so

Journalism Relevant," which Wayne or Garth could answer in one word, of course. Not. But all these poobahs and pundits yammered on about the most irrelevant shit, like whether or not it was okay to write about the fact that Kurt Cobain might or might not take heroin. Or whether anyone who actually cares about music even bothers to read Rolling Stone anymore. (Again: Not.) The whole thing would have been a complete waste of time if it hadn't been for this 15 year old who came up to the microphone, all polite and deferential, and asked all the rock critics, "Excuse me, but aren't you all a little old to be writing about pop music?"

There were a couple more quotable quotes. Claudia Perry of the Houston Post told some people - vis a vis this age thing, you know - that she had to

Austin understood the music biz so well. Then she was introduced to a gaggle of rock critics at her reception and gasped, "My God, can you actually make a living doing that?"

I got to be on a Demo Listening panel, the sort of thankless task they put the really Grade C celebrities. My co-panelists were an ex-member of Rubber Rodeo and some Limey from Chameleon Records U.K., and we got to sit in a small room with a bunch of blank-faced post-adolescents and tell them why their demo tapes sucked. There was one I really liked and the other two guys hated, a Portland, Oregon grungy band called Everclear. After the panel, their manager invited me to their show that night, and since it was during the first slot of the evening and I was free, I went.

The funny thing is that I was far from the only one there. Not only was the place packed (and it was this big warehouse space, not some dinky little club), but packed with A&R guys and record company people. It seems the buzz is on for Portland. It's the next Seattle. You read it here first. Everclear were okay.

One of the most talked about bands at the convention was Florida's Genitorturers, who had recently cut a deal with IRS. Think of them as GWAR gone S&M -- tight leather outfits, a female dominatrix lead singer, a big wooden sling, and a very kinky stage show. They pierced tongues, they flashed tits, they gave this poor slave girl an enema and then a guy with a giant rubber penis came out and squirted foam all over the front row. The music was dirty deathmetal and like GWAR, if it wasn't for the visuals nobody would care. They'll either be huge or in jail by the end of the year.

Funland from Dallas were actually a lot



The Genitorturers

of fun, just a poppy fourpiece with a front man who reminded me a bit of Robyn Hitchcock gone grunge. Speaking of Robyn, A&M Records threw him a tea which I attended with a couple of pals. Robyn fielded questions and tried to come up with witty answers, then played a few songs on acoustic guitar. It was more fun than going to see him do an actual set, actually.

Speaking of grunge, The Nixons are an Oklahoma band who jump around a lot on stage, set their guitars on fire with lighter fluid, and set off fireworks on stage. I dunno, it all sounds trite on paper, but being there, I actually had a helluva time and I'd go see them again in a minute. I even liked the songs.

I seem to have finally outgrown my affection for Austin's Duckhills; in the past, I found them lively and entertaining, but hearing the same set again for the fourth or fifth time was the capper, and they seemed merely tiresome, their singer's over-emotive stage antics just a bit too precious. (Happy now, Jason?)

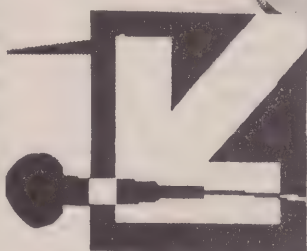
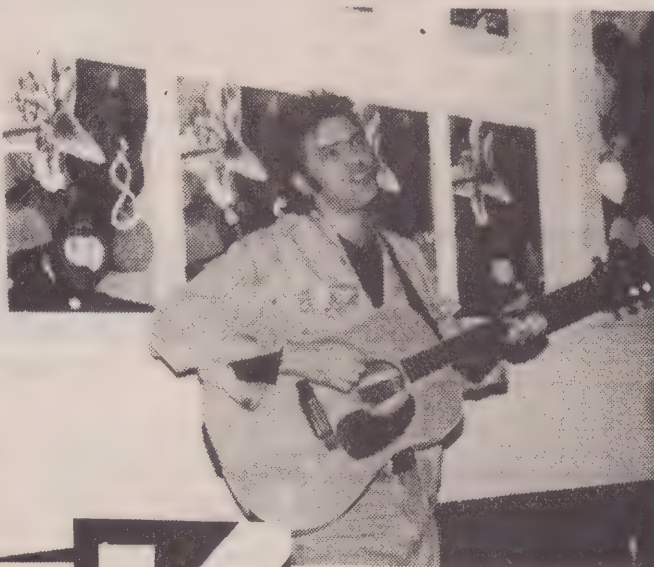
I caught two of Austin's finest white funk/rap acts: The Ging'breadmen, really young guys with a horn section, and Retarded Elf, who have big props and are kind of fun. I wonder if they know about the Sweet Lizard Illtet?

Big Wheel were their usual sweaty, dynamic selves, previewing their new album for a crowd that was all but swallowed up in a mammoth cave of a place called The Acropolis. Mammoth Record labelmates Antenna buzzed through some psyche-rock ably abetted by their newest member, none other than my old pal (and 27 Various frontman) Ed Ackerson from Minneapolis. Small world, huh?

Funny how some shows get a buzz and others don't. One of the most talked about shows at this thing was a lineup of Giant Sand, the Meat Puppets, and the Buckpets. Now, I did the Meat Puppets, but Giant Sand were boring when they were on Homestead

and I don't think they've improved all that much, and why would anyone want to give the Buckpets another chance? So I skipped that gig, and sure enough, the next day half the press corps was nursing a hangover and moaning, "Why the fuck did I go to that stupid show? It sucked!"

The best free meal of the conference was the Meat Puppets shindig at the



You meet the most interesting people in Texas, like Robyn Hitchcock (above), who had tea and brain drinks with the press and then played some songs, or rockcrit Tim Stegall, who wore his leather jacket to the softball game and barbecue.



barbecue pit (thanks, Regina); the worst was the Taco Belle leftovers Atlantic served at the Eleventh Dream Day party. The Print Media team won our first game but got clobbered by the Record Company guys in the second round at the softball game.

Tim Stegall didn't play, he just wandered around looking cool in his leather jacket even though it was in the 70's. As Tim explained to me, "A leather jacket isn't a piece of clothing, it's a way of life."

JOISEY

A Simple, Desultory Philippic About Our Special Issue

I don't have any idea why we've put so much work into doing a New Jersey issue. It's not like New Jersey - or at least its "alternative rock scene" (brrrr, spit when you say that) - goes out of its way to pay any attention to us. Most of the the new bands you see in these pages don't come to us -- I go running after them, usually after reading a review in Bob Makin's Jersey column in the Aquarian Weekly. And at least half the bands I write to don't even bother writing back.

Laziness and a clique mentality that borders on elitism have always been the biggest reasons why Jersey's rock scene has remained a national secret. Especially in New Brunswick - which could easily serve as the inspiration for a sequel to the movie Slacker - bands seem perfectly content to play in the city's small clubs, never advertising their shows or making any effort to find any fans outside the Hub City. The Court Tavern is still a fine place to see a band, especially when they're whipping up the Margarita Slurpees at the back bar, since it books shows on weekends. But at the Roxy, Melody, or Bowl-O-Drome, the town's three other livemusic venues, you practically have to live within a fiveblock radius to see the shows. First of all, the only advertising is word-of-mouth and the flyers that bands sometimes hang up around town. And secondly, they book these three-band shows on a Tuesday or Wednesday and then don't start until midnight, making it impossible to check out the music if you want to think about getting home before dawn and getting to work the next morning. Especially if, like me, you live a good hour away.

Most bands who play New Brunswick don't seem to make much of an effort to play in Manhattan. The bands that play the Brighton Bar in Long Branch (and there's a very cool shorecore scene down there) can't get booked in New Brunswick

because the clubs there are only interested in local bands. New Jersey's hardcore scene isn't any better. Most bands don't go out of their way to play out much (except when they go away on tour), which is why people in Milwaukee and Harrisburg have seen Greyhouse more than I have. When they do, it's frequently small, closed shows (Middlesex College, John Hilz's house) not accessible to the general public. The typical attitude of a lot of bands was summed up by Trenton's Vision, who booked a show at ABC No Rio, showed up and saw how small it was, and got back in their van & drove away. Punk rock is a lot like the weather; a lot of people talk about it, but nobody ever does anything about it.

That "What, me worry?" attitude is understandable, though. There seems to be a black cloud hovering over the East Coast; even when our bands get signed, which isn't often, terrible things happen. The Sweet Lizard Illtet has already been dropped by Warner Brothers after one album. Another popular Jersey funk/soul group, Lucy Brown, didn't fare any better after their one shot at the big time on MCA. Nudeswirl got to tour Europe with Mindfunk and America with Danzig, but they haven't sold a lot of records. Non-Fiction signed to I.R.S. and disappeared. And they're starting to print the Smithereens' photo on the side of milk cartons.

Still, there are good bands here in New Jersey (and an awful lot of bad ones as well.) We've got our own metal scene (anybody remember Trixter? well...what about Skid Row, then?), and funk and rock and soul and rap. This isn't a bad place to live if you like cool music, despite my complaints. And as long as we're around, we'll keep trying to tell you about it all, and we'll keep trying to make it even better. - Jim Testa

**CROCODILE SHOP is: MICKHALE - vocals/
programming/metal**

MARKUS - keyboards/programming

WERNER - bass/effects

Crocodile Shop consists of three clean-shaven, militaristic-lookin' *industrial* boys with an expected hostility towards traditional instruments, musicians, and musicianship. "We'll be playing way into the *future*, using the latest *technology*, meanwhile all these other people who are into 'primitive' sounds will be with their long hair all maggot-infested, sitting in a gutter, plucking on a stick with strings." Crocodile Shop shows are promoted as propaganda pieces advocating *order* and purity. Their mission is *deconstruction* and it's punctuated with an exclamation point.

LIVE PERFORMANCE: They are *diabolical*. They have embraced the fascist imagery that goes along with the industrial scene, taken it to its extreme, and then forced it into a mockery of itself. Crocodile Shop appears on stage in uniform, and utterly emotionless. In the background, Nazi-inspired banners wave, and in the foreground, four video monitors spew a montage of powerful *control*/images. They play a set of *clean*, digitally perfect, quasi-nihilistic songs and abruptly walk off in unison.

The effect is mesmerizing. I had a subconscious meltdown! Bombarded by so many subliminal images, I became one of the pliable *masses*, unknowingly completing the image and the exercise. Through some post-modern black irony, I had *submitted* to their sarcasm. (At some point during the show, I started to wonder exactly what type of gas was bein' emitted by the smoke machine, and I was only half-joking with myself.)

NEW RELEASES: C/S 12" EP (Danse Assembly Productions)

Rivet Head Culture compilation CD (If It Moves)

The C/S EP was deftly produced by Chris Randall, who has also produced remixes for KMFDM and LA Style. This slab is *proud*! The keys & clangin' are *affected*, the bass lines are ominous and addictive, and the vocals are *fierce*. The four-song EP is packed with the same tongue-in-cheek bits as their onstage visuals, and just as far from monotonous. I dubbed a copy to play in my car and I found myself driving' kinda aggressively, although I think the word the State Trooper used was "reckless." (I couldn't even hear the siren - I had the thing cranked!) These boys know what they're doin'.

CROCODILE SHOP, c/o Danse Assembly Production, 126 Montgomery St Box 3F, Highland Park NJ 08904.

CROCO DILE SHOP

War Is Peace
Love Is Hate
Music Is Fascism





NEW Brunswick

The Little Town With
The Big Guest List



by Dave Urbano (with kibutzin from Jim Testa)

NEW BRUNSWICK - If you're not from New Brunswick or have never seen a show in Brufus, this scene report is going to be very helpful. Many important bands have come through this town over the years and still do. So you could consider this your tourist guide to the most happenin' town on the East Coast, except maybe NYC (heh heh.) First off, let's consider its location; about 2/3 of the year, there are 50,000 Rutgers University students and yea, it is 45 minutes from Broadway, but who can afford that once a week? You can stay right in town, go out and enjoy live music, and eat economically (there are more cheap restaurants here than I care to mention.) One final note, if you're a drummer, you oughta think about moving here, because you'll always find a couple of people with guitars who need you.

The Venues Visit the notorious **Court Tavern** (124 Church St.) and see why visiting bands like Mudhoney, Superchunk, Laughing Hyenas, Ween, Skunk, Butthole Surfers, Alice Donut, Jesus Lizard, and Faith No More have graced its tiny stage. The Court has new local bands on Wednesdays, with national and local faves Thursday through Saturday. Bring your ID, because it's strictly Over 21 (they even proof Testa there, and he's been old enough to drink since before the Ramones made a record!) There are usually three decent bands on one bill and upstairs, free jazz, blues, merengue, and who knows what. The best drink is the 16 oz. Slurpee/Margarita. The house sound person is Kirk, who does an awesome job when he's not on the road tour-managing Ween. The shows are always loud, though, and whoever does the sound usually does a good job. The booking is done by E-Gun. Write to him at the club.

Next would be **The Melody** on French Street, which is an "alternative" dance club w/dancing downstairs and live bands upstairs, often 7 nights a week (or so it sometimes seems.) The sound is okay when there are people in the room; otherwise, it tends to be reverb heaven. Thursday is the night to play, with a harder type of booking done by Jen O. Again, it's Over 21 only.

The Roxy (95 French St.) is right across the street, and it indulges in techno and hip hop most of the week. Jersey Beat's Mick Hale spins there several times a week, and dj Rob Kolb books the only consistent 18&up shows in the area on Tuesday nights. Tuesdays have a pretty consistent crowd. The bands don't play on the floor anymore, there's actually a stage now which gets laid down every week, which improves the sound in the room. There have also been periodic all-ages matinees on Sundays.

The newest room in town is the **Bowl-O-Drome**, 89 Jersey

Previous page: From the top, Fried Ice Cream, Bouncing Souls, Ex-Vegas, Mr. Thumb

Ave, literally a rifle-shot away from the Roxy, Court, and Melody. The Drome features local bands on Wednesdays. Hopefully, by the end of this summer, the bar will be doing well enough that they'll be able to open the backroom as a separate club. It's large enough to hold several hundred people and would be a great venue for New Brunswick, since all these places now are rather small and really can't afford to book the larger national acts. So go there and drink a lot. Booking by Dan R.

There are also concerts at the Rutgers University campuses, but these are primarily for the students and rarely advertised outside the college community.

There are at least 50 bands I know of, either living here or associated with New Brunswick because they play here so often. We're going to try and cover as many of them as possible.

Sam Shiffman - New Brunswick's resident curmudgeon and, as an MRR columnist, the scene's most visible advocate. Pretty much burnt out and grumpy these days,

Sam fronted one of the great Jersey punk bands, P.E.D., through several hilarious 7 inches and an album on New Red Archives Records. He's also released several records on his own Complex Records label, most of which are still sitting in a box under his bed, unsold. Lately he can be frequently heard to mumble, "New Brunswick sucks," before ordering another beer.

Transilvia - Industrial hardcore marvels, very heavy ala Blue Cheer. One 7" on Well-Primed Records, and a CD/EP on the way via HeatBlast. They're looking for a drummer as I write this. You can read an in-depth interview with them by writing for a copy of Jersey Beat #47.

Butthead - The kings of "Absurd Rock" and local faves. They have a 7" and a CD on the way, both on HeatBlast.

Mr. Thumb - is the heavy & melodic ones, sucker. It's a jazz band, it's a rock band, it's...it's...it's my band. We have a 7" on Well-Primed Records, and a CD/EP coming on Behemoth Records.

Crocodile Shop - do the techno/industrial thing, with Jersey Beat regular Mick Hale on vocals. He and co-CrocShop conspirator Markus also perform in the live incarnation of **Ish**, another techno outfit with more of an ambient/danse groove. Mick spins techno and other subversive musics several nights a week at The Roxy, including the newly revamped Sunday night programme called "Club Berlin."

Jive Bible - are those rhythm-on-a-hollow-body-guitar guys, kind of like a glitchy Wonderstuff, with a 7" on KoKoPop.

Nude Swirl - are the feedback kings of the scene, with riffs dredged from the Earth by ancient tractors of thunder. They were grunge before anybody knew where Seattle was, but

Welcome
To
New
Brunswick

their debut, self-released lp is totally out of print. They're the only young local band signed to a "real" label; their self-titled album was released earlier this year by Megaforce Records and got lots of great reviews.

kiaro scuro - layers of guitar and droning bass, with singer Sara. They have a CD on Well-Primed.

Mars Needs Women - Really powerful live, and they rock the flannel off any band. Drummer Ray used to play in Motel Shootout. A single is in the works from Well-Primed.

Motel Shootout - are a bunch of real rockers that make the Stones look like Catholic schoolboys. Heavy on the Elvis Costello and T-Rex influence. Lead singer Keith Hartel is a veteran of the Jersey punk scene, going way back to the early Buy Our Records days as the singer of Pleased Youth (with guitarist Paul Decolator, now of Loose.) Keith later did time as one of Adrenalin OD's several bass players, as well as several months in Lucy's Trance with ex-AOD drummer Dave Scott.

Amandla - features Claude Coleman Jr of Skunk. His band sounds like Elvis' Attractions in an earthy sort of way.

Mother Hubbard's Children - By their own admission, one of the most unpopular bands in the area. "We are outside the clique. We are banned from the Court Tavern, we are ostracized at the Roxy, we are ignored at the Melody Bar," says singer J. Keiz. "We are overwhelmed by mumbling vocals and jangling guitars and wannabe R.E.M.'s. We are pigeonholed as heavy metal. We are not heavy metal. We are just HEAVY. We march on." Their demo is...heavy. At least they found a new drummer.

Sticks And Stones - Although members now live throughout the state, frontman Peter Ventantonio has been an important member of the New Brunswick punk scene, including a stint in the seminal P.E.D. This raging Clash-like rock and roll band recently released an album of modernday punk anthems on Skene! Records.

Fried Ice Cream - sound like Sly and his funksters on shrooms with a modern hip hop feel. One thing about New Brunswick, we got a lot of bands with black and white members playing together.

Knew Breed - Funk, Rock it, and groooove.

The Blisters - have broken up, but for a good long time they were one of the coolest bands in NJ, with a throbbing melodic punk feel that grabbed you like a mixture of Descendents and 'Mats on the rocks. They put out a lot of singles, compilation cuts, and an album, if you can find any of 'em. Two members, Bil and Dennis, are now in **Swingset**, still playing some mean Minneapolis-styled punk/pop but with harder vocals.

Bad Karma - have been around the scene forever. They rock it w/cool slide punk rock guitar stuff.

Seething Grey - Melodic post-punk with longtime scene dude and potential superstar Pete Horvath (yet another ex-P.E.D.)

Dysrhythmia - Punk rock noise, check it out.

Seigobillies - Lots of small wooden instruments mixed with drums and electric guitars doing hippie music.

Loose - The original Loose seemed like New Brunswick's great white hope during the post-Nirvana signing frenzy, with a strong alternative pop sound based on the strength of Mike Flaherty's captivating vocals. They released a 7" on Complex Records and are featured on the Jersey Beat Videozine. When the band's major label deal fell through, so did their spirits, and they eventually broke up. However, guitarist Paul Decolator is putting together a new version of Loose with Maxwell's soundman Andy Peters on guitar.

Headstrong - A mainstay of the local hardcore clique, Headstrong recently replaced their original lead singer (who's busy in grad school) with Timmy Chunks (ex-Token Entry.) Timmy's generic Old School warbling seems far less distinctive than his predecessor's bluesy growl, but the band's been a lot more active since the change. Two 7 inch appearances but good luck finding either one. They also appear on Jersey Beat's Video Fanzine #1.

Chris Harford - The 90's Neil Young. Signed to Elektra. His debut album has more local guest stars than you'll see on a Saturday night at the Court.

Apple-O - Dissonant guitars doing power chord stuff. They've got a 7" out

on Jiffy Boy Records, c/o White Bread Zine.

Sit N SpinP - New Brunswick's own riot grlrs, they play quirky, catchy, three-chord drag strip rock. Their drummer just split to join the Friggs, who do gal surf rock (with a single on Sympathy For The Record Industry.)

Duochrome - A brand new band does a Pavement/Galaxie 500 thing and is also looking for a drummer!

Sicker Than Others - Comical post-punk dementia with a lead singer who



NUDESWIRL

usually winds up in nothing but his jockey shorts by the end of a show. A lot of fun to watch, a lot of noise to listen through.

All God's Children - A multi-cultural experience, with a World Beat fusion of sounds that can be both psychedelically inspiring and danceably grooving. They have a record coming out soon.

The Barileycorns - play aggressive, funky, joyous Celtic rock, with a CD on Clever Dick Records.

The Bouncing Souls - have been working on a self-released CD of their post-hardcore funk stylings. They've definitely got the Chili Peppers freaky style thing going but their newer stuff goes in a lot of different directions for a more original and potent appeal. The kids in town love 'em.

Broke - Vicious punked-out hippies, with a 7" on Albertine Records. Features members of **Tiny Lights** who, although they really hail from Hoboken, have long been a popular New Brunswick draw, especially during the four years that bassist Dave Dreiwitz went to Rutgers. They play spacey love-funk and have released several records on different labels. Dave also plays bass in the duo **Instant Death**, with Scott Byron doing samplings and drumming.

But Ugly - The name of this band is actually "...but ugly," but when you start a line with three periods, our computer software has a tendency to get very confused. They play punk rock reminiscent of Adrenalin O.D. and the Ramones, with a Neil Young fixation. (Double 7", Abuse Your Delusions I & II, on Dumb Head Records.)

Clayton's Foot - are new to the scene, with their post-metal hyper-rock.

Catharsis - Another longtime scene band, they play noise-rock and have recently released a 7".

Dandelion Fire - were profiled in Jersey Beat #48. Since then, they've signed to KoKoPop for a single and a CD, with a kind of liquid Manchester Americanized sound.

False Front - Iggy meets Pink Floyd whenever False Front drive up from Trenton to play New Brunswick. They always put on a great show. Their self-titled lp is on Shimmydisc and is worth finding.

Greg Digesu & Fisherman's Stew - "Dose me, love it," they have something coming out real soon.

Gerrymander Bob - are from the Philly area but play here often, and I can't say enough except that they know how to fuckin' rock it, and they write really good songs with that wah wah. (Two 7 inches, one available on Well Primed. Buy it!)

The Insomniacs - hail from nearby Englishtown and do the best 60's mod/garage thing 'round these parts. They've released two swingin' singles on their own Umbrella Records.

Resurrection - Rumored to be a local hardcore band. The Jersey Devil and Elvis make more live appearances.

Mad Daddy's - real rock n roll in its three-chord glory. Another band that's been around forever but never slows down. They have a CD on Sympathy.

Lifetime - The local straight-edge ringleaders only play



ROOM ELEVEN

all-ages shows, which are few and far between in this area. Youth Of Today style moshcore, complete with Champion sportswear, lyrics about "unity," and an ever-changing lineup. Check out the singles bins for their stuff.

Pam Novick of Sheila Na-Gig - A most captivating songwriter, not to mention one mama of a vocalist.

Remote Control Yedi - Big sounds complete with a DJ.

Room Eleven - A good live band, with kinetic cyber chords. Singer Jeff Hack supplies the emotion and electrified acoustic guitar, with songs that combine New Order's prehensile moodiness with Clash-like punk rock energy.

Homos With Attitude - or HWA, this is the local queer band with a suave Hispanic lead singer who likes to sing in nothing but boxer shorts and combat boots.

The Selves - are actually based out of Hoboken, but by virtue of their long-standing relationship with the Court, deserve to be included here; these guys were doing funk-rock before it was fashionable (and moody Velvets alternapop before that).

The Urchins - Female singer doing swirlie rock, with ex-Spiral Jetty bassist Andy Gesner providing able backup.

Ex-Vegas - Formerly Vegas Crash. Doing a Velocity Girl thing with torrential wall-of-noise 4AD guitars, alluring female vocals, and the best drummer in town. Two

members were formerly in a great little band called Mayfirst.

There are lots of other bands who both live in town and frequent New Brunswick, and we apologize to anyone we left out. We'll be doing periodic updates and Jersey Beat does local band profiles every issue, so send your stuff directly to the zine or to Dave Urbano at Thumbbox, PO Box 154, New Brunswick NJ 08903.

RESOURCES by Ted Cogswell (and Jim Testa)

RADIO - Central and South Jersey have some of the best college radio in the country, making your drive up the NJ Turnpike or Garden State Parkway a punk rock delight, as long as you keep twiddling the left side of the dial.

WFMU 91.1 FM (Upsala College, East Orange NJ) - Completely free form. You name it, it's here. Lots of local and sub-indie coverage. Live in-studio performances on Pat Duncan's not-to-be-missed Thursday night punk show, 9:30 - 12 pm.

WHTG 106.3 FM - Jersey shore-based, commercial "alternative" station. Pretty boring, but worth checking once in a while. "Local Licks," Sunday nights 8-9 pm focuses exclusively on area acts.

WPRB 103.3 FM (Princeton University, Box 342, Princeton NJ 08540) Pretty much all indie rock, punk, etc. during afternoons and evenings, while daytime is mostly jazz and college stuff. Excellent.

WRSU 88.7 FM (Rutgers College, 126 College Ave, New Brunswick NJ 08903) The best college station in the state, RSU is solid indie, sub-underground from bumper to bumper. "Overnight Sensations" ever Sunday night, 9-10 pm, focuses exclusively on local bands and shows. Mostly freeform rock-based, except for weekend afternoons which feature many specialty, community interest, and ethnic programs.

WSOU 89.5 FM (South Orange, NJ) Metal, some local and indie rock.

Record Labels

Complex Records, 131 N 6th Ave, Highland Park NJ 08904 - MRR columnist Sam Shiffman's "ongoing attempt" at documenting the New Brunswick scene. Loose 7", and 4-band compilation EP are still available and only \$3 ppd.

HeatBlast Records, PO Box 491, Eatontown NJ 07724 - Started out as a singles label but has moved into album-length CD's. Lots of cool bands from the southern part of the state. Write for catalog.

Well-Primed Records, PO Box 351, New Brunswick NJ 08903 - Homegrown co-op that launched Transilvia, Mr Thumb, and Gerrymander Bob to fame. "House band" kiaro scuro (bassist Frank is Well-Primed's CEO) is rapidly establishing the label as a Jersey forte. Other past releases include All God's Children, Scott Byrne, Wooden Soldiers, Bald Red Lady (reviewed this issue), and Dandelion Fire. Write for catalog.

Publications/Media

Convenient Living (PO Box 5063, RPO 2203, New Brunswick NJ 08903) Punk rock fanzine. Not sure what's up during the summer. \$1

Dub Catcher (PO Box 4203, Highland Park NJ 08904) A #1 reggae rag, tabloid-newspaper format. \$2

Gunk (16 Lordstirling Rd, Basking Ridge NJ 07920) Local riot grrls writing about skateboarding, sexism, and boys.

No Longer A Fanzine (Jos. Gervasi, 142 Frankford Ave, Blackwood NJ 08012) Rants, interviews, journals from the editor's travels, and stuff on local shows and bands. \$2

Radio Riot (126 College Ave, New Brunswick NJ 08903) WRSU's Matt Gard's one-sheet newsletter, with scene gossip, rants, a few reviews. Available for a SASE.

Shoelace (PO Box 7952, W. Trenton NJ 09628) Erik Szantai's long-running zine, with bands, record reviews, graphics, and columns by local scenesters like Bob Conrad.

White Bread Fanzine (373B Suoy Place Rd, Vincentown NJ 08088, or RPO 4601, PO Box 5063, New Brunswick NJ 08903 during school) Brandon Stosuy's punk rock fanzine. "An okay zine from an ok guy." Also does Jiffy Boy records.



GERRYMANDER BOB

1. **Madder Rose**

Potent female vocals and plaintive alternative melodies make Madder Rose one of Hoboken's most promising bands, with a strong debut album on Seed Records. The group has yet to emerge as a presence on the local club scene, but their low profile only serves to make their low-keyed pop approach that much more enticing when they do play out.

2. **Sex Pod**

Karyn Kuhl and Alice Genese (of the late, great Gutbank) return with drummer Billy Loos in this powerful hard-rock ensemble. With Led Zep riffs and sensuous, beguiling vocals, Sex Pod is one of the sexiest and most promising bands on the scene.

3. **Sound Of Skin**

With a British vocalist and a talented lead guitarist, Sound Of Skin combine dense, moody washes of wah wah guitar and industrial dissonance with piercing, almost Gothic lyrics. The band plays out frequently, except during those periods when lead singer Paul's visa expires and he's deported back to England for a few weeks. The group just released its eponymous debut album on its own label, reviewed in this issue.

4. **Sweet Lizard Illtet**

This band's future is up in the air; their debut lp on Warner Bros. bombed big time and the band lost their drummer and percussionist in May. They're looking for replacements and vow to carry on, but since the Illtet's funk/rap groove was so dependent on its rhythm section, it's hard to predict how they'll fare with new members.

5. **The Mary's**

Enchanting folk/rock with male/female vocals and one of the best local singles of 1992, "The Day Roy Orbison Died."

6. **Yo La Tengo**

Perennial local favorites, their next album will be on Bar None. You can never predict what Yo La Tengo will do next: acoustic folk/pop, ear-damaging sonic noise-fusion, lively alternative-rock, or some mind-bending cover. They make each gig an event, and every new album a celebration.

7. **Ritual Tension**

Newly reunited after a three-year hiatus, the band continues its exploration of angst-driven noise/rock in the Sonic Youth/Live Skull tradition, with original drummer Mike Shockley back after his excursion with the Sweet Lizard Illtet and bald, bizarre lead singer Ivan Naham (husband to Sexpod's Alice Genese) back screaming his lungs out.

8. **American Standard**

As much a "Hoboken" band as anything else, American Standard continue to build on their hardcore roots, adding Pearl Jam-ish grunge riffs to their sledgehammer repertoire of catchy punk/metal. Their debut album is out of print, but they also released a solid EP last year on Blackout Records.

9. **Spent**

Hoboken in spirit, three-quarters of Spent actually share a house in nearby Jersey City. Catchy riffs and bouncy melodies can't obscure the overwhelming sadness in their music. A 4AD band with a NJ address, Spent recently released their first single on the Ringers Lactate label.

10. **Outcrowd**

No one ever goes to see them, but this trio continues to play emotional punk/pop with strong D.C. roots and powerful, anthemic hooks. They released an EP last year on Blackout Records.

HOBOKEN TODAY: 10 Bands That Matter



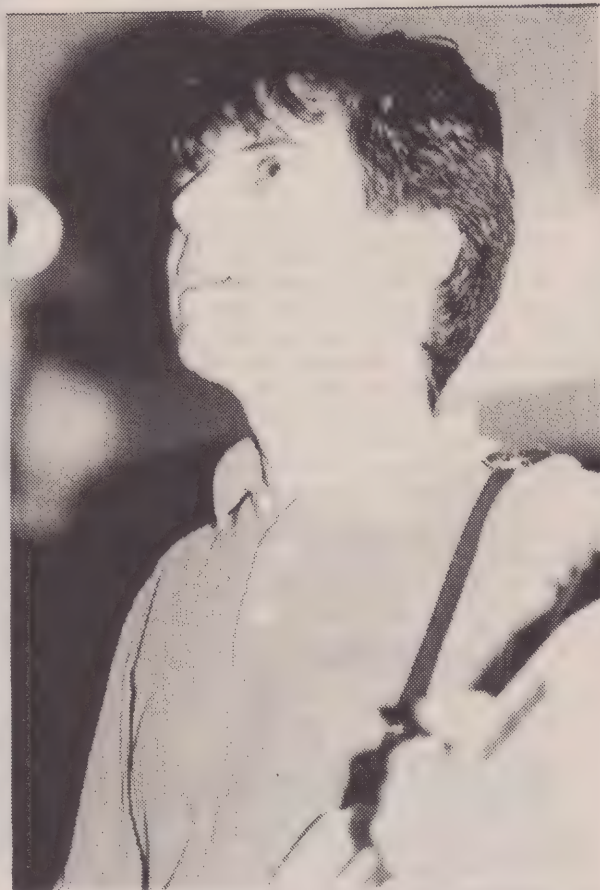
whatever happened to... **HOBOKEN?**

by Jim Testa

Seattle's rock scene may be enjoying its 15 minutes of fame today, but have you ever wondered what all those grungy guys in flannel shirts will be doing in ten years? The thought occurred to me recently when I realized that it's been about ten years since Hoboken was the big buzzword in alternative rock, and everyone in the music industry thought that the Mile Square City was going to be the new Liverpool.

Hoboken was a very different place in the early 80's. Condo conversions and gentrification were still years away, and the city's cheap rents and the easy commute to New York had turned Hoboken into a bohemian Mecca. Bands had starting moving to New York in the late 70's, inspired by the punk rock scene on the Bowery. Many of them flocked to the Mile Square City, enticed by the cheap rents and the city's fabled new pop scene.

Maxwell's had opened as a rock club in 1978 and by 1982 was drawing national attention as THE place to discover new bands, aided in large part by the then-influential New York Rocker magazine (many of whose staff - Ira Kaplan, Glenn Morrow, Michael Hill - already lived in Hoboken.) Groups like the Bongos, Individuals, dB's and the Feelies had seemingly reinvented the idea of pop music, and almost every week brought another new discovery, some amazing new single or a fresh, new band entering the scene. In 1982, Steve Fallon started Coyote Records and even more bands emerged from the scene - Beat Rodeo, the Cyclones, the Phosphores... But by 1983, the seeds of dissolution and decay had already been sown. The initial flush of excitement and discovery had disappeared. New York Rocker was gone, having published its last issue in November, '92 (ironically, dedicated to the Hoboken scene.) The Bongos released "Numbers With Wings," their first album for RCA Records. And the dB's



CHRIS STAMEY



THE **BONGOS**

finally landed an American major label deal, just as Chris Stamey released "It's A Wonderful Life," and prepared to leave the group for a solo career. The Feelies only played on holidays, preferring to devote their energies to other projects. Glenn Mercer and Bill Million wrote the soundtrack for the movie *Smithereens*, and played out in weird offshoot bands like Yung Wu and the Willies.

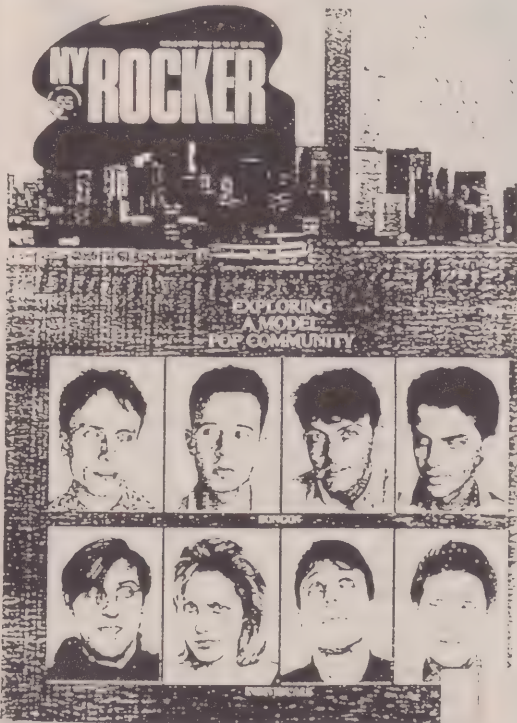
So what happened? Who knows? Bad timing, the indifference of FM radio, the lack of national exposure (there wasn't any MTV in 1983), and ill-advised business decisions by some of the bands all contributed to the scene's demise. Quite a few of those early scenesters are still around. Glenn Morrow, who led the Individuals, now comanages Hoboken's Bar None Records. New York Rocker's managing editor, Michael Hill, became an A&R man with Warner Brothers Records. Ira Kaplan, who worked for years as the

soundman at Maxwell's, now leads one of Hoboken's most successful bands, Yo La Tengo. But most of the names who were supposed to be The Next Big Thing in 1983 remain obscure cult heroes today at best, and in some cases, out of music altogether. Here's a quick rundown on some of those groups and what they're doing now:

THE BONGOS - No band epitomized Hoboken's pop scene more than the Bongos, whose sparkling power-pop singles on England's Fetish label made them one of the most talked-about new bands in America. Originally a trio composed of singer/guitarist Richard Barone, bassist Rob Norris (who had played in one of the last incarnations of the Velvet Underground) and drummer Frank Giannini, the band expanded to a quartet with the addition of second guitarist James Mastro in 1982.

IN 1983, The Bongos signed to RCA with high hopes, becoming Hoboken's first major label band since the Punk Era. But after only one EP (the effervescent "Numbers With Wings") and a disappointing album (*Beat Hotel*, in which the group tried to "expand" its sound, adding a percussionist, keyboards, and a Latin flavor), the group bolted RCA for Island Records, a disastrous move that proved their undoing.

The band made some demos at Island's famous Compass Point Studios in the Bahamas, but the label decided not to release the sessions and the band never recorded again.



New York Rocker did more to promote Hoboken's new scene than any other music publication, but it folded after publishing this special Hoboken issue in November, 1982.



THE FEELIES Photo by Andy Peters

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Barone went on to a solo career, recording two beautiful albums of mostly acoustic rock enhanced by woodwinds and strings, one for the now-defunct Jem Records and one for MCA. However, just before the release of his third album, *Clouds Over Eden*, last year, Barone was dropped by MCA and is currently shopping for a new deal.

"It looks very good and I've been talking to several labels," said Barone. "They all said we could get the album out by next fall so I'm very optimistic."

Norris left music and is now a massage therapist, practicing in Hoboken. Drummer Frank Giannini is a housepainter. The only ex-Bongo with a record deal is James Mastro, ironically the last to join and the first to leave the band, who is currently finishing his first post-Bongos project, an album with his band The Health & Happiness Show for Hoboken's Bar-None Records.

THE FEELIES - Although the Feelies actually lived in Haledon, NJ, they were always one of the pre-eminent bands on the Hoboken scene, by virtue of their popularity and influence. Richard Barone of the Bongos was only one of many musicians who cited the Feelies as one of his greatest inspirations.

The Feelies seemed to live outside of time and space, somehow - percussionist Dave Weckerman once said, "Being in the Feelies is like living in a pyramid - nothing ever changes and no one ever grows older." And indeed, for years it seemed that way. Guitarists Bill Million and Glenn Mercer never lost their boyish looks or high-strung energy, and even during those years when the band was on hiatus and members emerged in offbeat side projects like the Willies (an instrumental version of the band that played in the dark), Yung Wu (in which Weckerman sang and wrote most of the songs) and the Trypes, the Feelies were always the band that everyone talked about and looked up to.

Amazingly, the group released its first album - the seminal punk-rock classic *Crazy Rhythms* - in 1980 and didn't record again until 1986, when Steve Fallon convinced them to make an album for his Coyote Records label. With Fallon as their manager, the band enjoyed newfound popularity in the newly emerging college radio and alternative market of the mid-80's. Under Fallon's tutelage, the group signed to A&M Records, where they recorded two more albums.

Sadly, the Feelies never found the national audience that would make them more than cult heroes (and allow them to pay the bills without also working day jobs.) In 1992, plagued by fainting spells on stage, founding member Bill Million quit the band, and eventually relocated to Orlando, Florida, where he now works with his father as a locksmith. Recently, Weckerman and Mercer reemerged with a new and quite Feelies-like group called Wake Ooloo, and bassist Brenda Sauter has a new band called Wild Carnation. Both have been playing out frequently in the area. Drummer Stanley Demeski is a member of Luna2, who are signed to Elektra Records.



THE dB's - The dB's featured two singer/guitarists - Peter Holsapple and Chris Stamey, both from Winston-Salem, North Carolina - who played off one another's strengths to create quirky, complex, and wonderfully catchy pop songs. Holsapple was the McCartney of the team, an unregenerate popster and romantic, while Stamey played the role of John Lennon, writing quirky tunes that took a jaundiced view of traditional relationships. Although they quickly became a favorite in the early 80's Hoboken scene, the dB's couldn't find an American label and released their first two lp's, the brilliant *Stands For Decibels* and the even more amazing *Repercussion*, on England's Albion label.

Stamey left the group to pursue a solo career in 1983, while Holsapple continued to lead the remaining dB's through a disastrous business relationship with Bearsville Records (which resulted in a long-delayed but fine album, *Like This*). Eventually, the band extricated itself from its contract and signed to IRS for the last dB's album, *The Sound Of Music*, but by then it was too late; Holsapple's muse had played itself out. The songwriting was sluggish and tired (except for the buoyant "Molly Says," an old, unrecorded favorite from the Stamey days) and the album did poorly. Dropped by IRS, the group finally went their separate ways, with Holsapple eventually relocating in New Orleans. He's currently playing with Suzi Cowsill (of The Cowsills fame) in a group called Continental Drifters.

Stamey's solo career included several albums for Fallon's Coyote Records and eventually a deal with A&M, but he too could never find a national audience and was dropped by

JERSEY BEAT

New Jersey's New-Music Nexus

Vol. 1 No. 2

April - May 82

POP! Go The

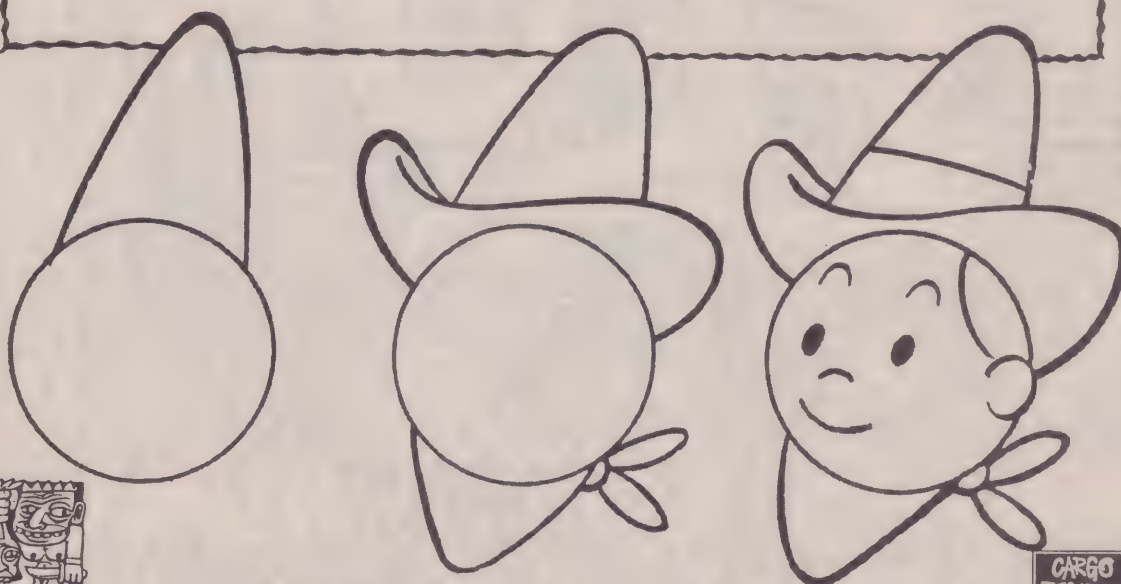
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...BONGOS!

the label during a corporate reshuffling. In 1991, he reunited with Holsapple for an album of acoustic folk/rock called *The Mavericks*, and a year later, recorded a solo album for Rhino. That project did very poorly, however, and Stamey left Hoboken and moved back to Winston-Salem earlier this year.

CREEDLE: HALF MAN, HALF PIE



Debut full length CD



The Swales are a NJ four-piece that somewhere fits in the pop perspective of things, but that's about as much as I can pigeonhole them. Their current CD, *Pleasureland*, grows on you with multiple listens, and the band has a harmony working together that shines through when you see them live. I caught up with Bob Carr (lead vocals, rhythm guitar), Larry Bonforte (bass, bongos, vocals), Eric Harris (drums, keyboards, vocals) and Rich Weiner (lead guitar, vocals) in Hoboken.

Q: I didn't think the CD did you justice. The songs were good individually, but it lacked a certain continuity.

Rich: The songs we written were done over such a long time span... we just picked out songs that jived with us. That's why it's not so homogeneous in the theme dept.

Bob: Overall, there is a central theme - you just have to hear it a number of times.

Larry: The record was made on a shoestring and very quickly, due to time constraints.

Eric: Nonetheless, it was the best record we could do under the circumstances.

Q: Your music has such a broad range, how would you describe yourselves?

Rich: We hate doing that. We've been compared to Squeeze, the Jam, Midnight Oil, Grateful Dead. Someone once asked us who played the bagpipes on our record. What bagpipes?

Bob: Our record company didn't compare us to anyone, which is good, because except for the Aquarian, no one said we sounded like anyone else.

Larry: There's no conscious effort on our part to sound like anyone else.

Q: How is Bar None treating you?

Bob: As well as they can. They're a small label with little dollars but a lot of integrity.

Rich: It's easy to complain, but they've given us a shot.

Q: How did the Swales come into being?

Eric: The "scene" - we were in rival bands and then our bands broke up. Rich came later, and I knew Bob from a long time back. We advertised for a guitar player, and the rest is history. We sent Bar None a tape and they showed some interest.

Rich: I didn't get picked for my ability. They told me the

other guy had a day job, he was in good with IBM.

Q: Look at it this way, if he works for IBM, he's probably got plenty of time to practice now.

Bob: Yeah, he's been calling a lot lately. We had this other guy try out too, but it's hard to warm up to someone who has one of his effects on his belt. Women, parents, and moms like us. That guy (Star Ledger critic Jay Lustig) who said we were trying to be like someone else in indie rock took me off guard. We're not trying to be anything, we just write the songs and go in the basement and play.

Q: Since you're a young band, do you envision acquiring a more identifiable sound?

The Swales

by Tom Brebric

Larry: We always fight about it.

Bob: It's like a pop-rock thing. Like turning on the radio during the 60's and hearing 20 different things. There is a sound and it's not that obvious. The problem of getting pigeonholed is, where do you end up? Like the grunge thing.

Q: Does your eclectic style concern you as to what's next? What labels will show interest?

Bob: The strength is in the songs for us, that's what we pride ourselves on. We don't underestimate the open-mindedness of people or labels. We'd rather have a slow ascent than a meteoric rise, and our label feels the same way.

Q: What's coming up next?

Bob: We're supposed to go on a national tour but it's still in negotiation.

Larry: Buy our album. Your mom will like it.



Jersey City

SPENT: Sad Pop For Savvy Slackers

by Jim Testa

Hoboken? Why even bother? Spent have the right idea. These former college pals reunited after several years of going in different directions - John King as lead singer of Our American Cousins - and found a ramshackle old house to share in Jersey City, just a stone's throw from Christ Hospital and a short walk to the White Castle in Journal Square. What more could you want?

Well...a career maybe. In the meantime, we invaded Spent's inner city sanctum for this chat with John King (guitar, vocals), Joe Weston (guitar, vocals), Annie Hayden (bass, vocals), and Sean O'Heir.

Q: So the way I understand it, John, Joe and Annie went to school together, and then when all your projects wound up in the toilet, you decided to get back together, right?

Joe: Right. We decided to form a supergroup.

Q: How did you wind up in Jersey City? Everybody knows it's only cool if you're a *Hoboken* band.

Annie: John was the leader.

John: Yeah, I think we started out in Hoboken. I thought it was cool because of Pier Platters and Maxwell's. And it *is* cool, kinda cool, but it's also very, very expensive. So by default, we ended up in Jersey City.

Joe: I was living in Connecticut for a while and was interested in moving. And John was the only person I knew who was as lost as I was. We didn't know what we wanted to do, but we knew we wanted to form a band, which is basically why I moved here.

Q: John, you actually bailed out of Hoboken when you were still in Our American Cousins.

John: Yeah, well, when I was in Cousins, I was already planning to be in a band with Joe, so I was planning ahead. I was living in Hoboken in a basement apartment with no windows and paying the same rent I'm paying now, to live in a big, beautiful house that's all ours with a practice space in the basement and a backyard. It seemed kind of dumb to pass that up.

Joe: At the time, we were also like, oh, Hoboken's really had it, it's dead. Jersey City is really cool. That's the place to be.

Q: So now when you do interviews, you say with pride, "We're a Jersey City band?"

Joe: Totally. Except for Annie. She doesn't live here. The rest of us do.

John: We were really psyched when we moved here

because then we could really say we're a Jersey City band. I don't know what people think of Jersey City, but when I tell people I live here, they either say, "oh, I used to live there but I moved," or they say, "What are you doing *there*?" So I kind of like saying it just to freak people out.

Q: At least Jersey City groups are getting signed, unlike all the Hoboken bands. Of course, they're all rappers.

John: Right. P.M. Dawn. Who else lives here?

Q: Queen Latifah, D-Nice, Double XX Posse, Apache, Nikki D. There's probably a couple more I can't think of.

Sean: What about our kind of stuff?

Q: I don't know any other cool rock bands in Jersey City. I

Hoboken's cool, but it's also very, very expensive. Jersey City is the place to be

know a lot of shitty ones who send me demo tapes all the time... Actually, there's a band here called World Without End who won the Uncle Floyd Battle of the Bands at Escapades a while ago, so they're pretty cool.

John: Oh, wow! I'd *love* to be on Uncle Floyd.

Q: Let's talk about day jobs for a minute. What do you do?

Joe: I water plants. And I have a college degree.

Q: What was this college you all went to? Does the alumni association know about you people?

John: Actually, it was Fairfield University and it's a pretty good school. A lot of Fairfield alumni live in Hoboken, which is another reason not to live there.

Q: So Joe and John go to office buildings and water the plants there for a living. What do you do, Sean?

Sean: I'm a library assistant.

Q: Well, at least that's white collar.

John: Hey, our job is green collar!

Sean: It's really more like light blue collar, what I do.

Annie: And I'm a receptionist. I used to be a schoolteacher.

Q: Did you get out because the money was bad, or because you couldn't stand the kids?

Annie: A little of both. I just burnt out. I taught in middle school, which tells you everything you need to know.

Q: Okay, let's talk about the music a little bit. Even though on the surface your songs are all kind of catchy, I thought there was something about the music, no matter what the lyrics were about, that was sad somehow.

Sean: Where did you see us?

Q: At that NYU Independent Music Fest fiasco.

Joe: That was pretty sad all around. But didn't you describe John's songs as happy and light?

Q: That was a review of the demo tape. I'm talking about live, I was struck by the sadness in the music.

Sean: The songs themselves, or our depiction of them?

John: Other people have said that, that we sound really sad when we talk into the microphone, we look really sad. But it's probably just because we were really nervous.

Q: Even on the single, there's that sadness, though.

John: Usually when I sit down to write lyrics, I try to think of the worst thing that's happened to me lately. And I usually

don't write a bunch of songs until I feel screwed over or hurt somehow. And then I'm like, whoa, I have to write a song about this...

Joe: It is interesting how songs on a demo tape can sound so different from when you hear them live. The five songs on the tape are all different, all different tempos and styles and stuff. There's no one "sound" to the tape.

John: Do you think Joe sounds like Ian Curtis? We got a lot of that in the reviews.

Q: It's the eye-glasses.

John: So far, people have said Joy Division, New Order, and the Cure. And Orange Juice. Somebody pegged us as a New Wave band, I think.

Q: The post-grunge thing is shaping up to be totally New Wave. Every new demo I get is, like, turn the treble way up. No more effects on the guitars.

John: Basically, I scoff at anyone who compares us to those bands.

Sean: You have to admit that New Wave stuff did influence us though. It was the first music most of us listened to. Devo, the Knack, stuff like that.

Q: The other thing I've noticed is that bands are getting older. It used to be you'd get out of college, knock around in a band for a few years, and then when you hit 25, it was time to hang it up and go to law school or something. Bands seem to be sticking with it longer now.



John: It's scary when we're not considered young kids in a rock band anymore. We're not even young adults. We're just sort of...

Q: Slackers.

John: Exactly. Living the stereotype.

Sean: I think we're working pretty hard at it.

Q: I wrote this whole thing once about how slackers work harder than anybody.

John: They just don't get paid for it.

Q: I'm sure any of you could be sitting in an office somewhere making 40 grand a year, instead of being on your feet all day watering plants and making maybe 20 grand a year so you can have the time to be in a band.

Joe: Twenty grand if you're lucky.

John: And then driving all weekend to play gigs at some godforsaken hellhole and not getting paid.

Joe: Yeah, we're a hard working bunch!

Q: So are you in this for the long haul? Are you looking for a career out of this?

Joe: Annie always says she wants to quit her job.

Annie: I have this conflict, every day I tell myself the band is my excuse to keep this shitty day job that I hate. I'm really not ashamed to say I wouldn't mind quitting my job to go tour for a year. Finally, I'm starting to convince myself that this is what I really want to do with my life, play music. So you get all these guilt pangs from your parents, who paid to send me to school and all.

John: I just don't think at all. I've never thought, I'm going to be doing this for the rest of my life. I try not to think too far in advance. What'll I be doing in August is about all I can handle. That's looking into the future for me.

Joe: Sean just wants to rock.

Sean: Yeah, someone asked me once, what do you want to do with your life, and I just came out and said, "I want to rock." Typical drummer response. As long as it's heavy.

Joe: We had advertised for a drummer in the beginning. The three of us had been writing songs for a while and playing together for about a year.

John: For about a year, we weren't really a band. We didn't have a name. We just knew we were gonna be a band.

Q: I remember, that whole year everytime I'd come see Our American Cousins, you'd come over and say to me, don't tell these other guys but I have another band and I'm quitting this to play with them.

John: Yeah, you'd always wait till I was drunk, x's in my eyes, and then try to interview me.

Joe: So we finally got, like, we have to do something. We have to get a drummer and be a real band. So we put some ads up. We got a few calls. Went through the same nonsense. Actually, Lyle Hysen of Das Damen tried out for our band. Das Damen had just broken up and he wanted to play. But we weren't on the same wavelength.

Q: It's hard to play in a basement with someone who's

toured Japan.

John: Actually, he'd just played in a stadium for thousands of people in Germany, two weeks before he tried out with us. We didn't quite know how to play our guitars, and we're like, you want to play with *us*?

Joe: Anyway, I knew Sean went to Fordham and was still living in the area. He knew a friend of mine who had gone to Fordham with him.

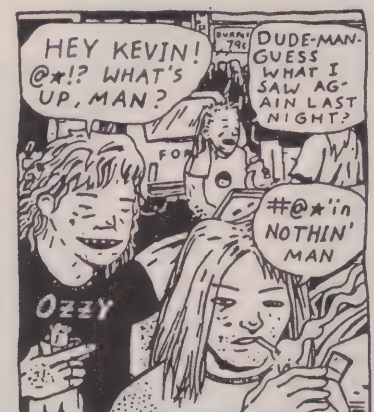
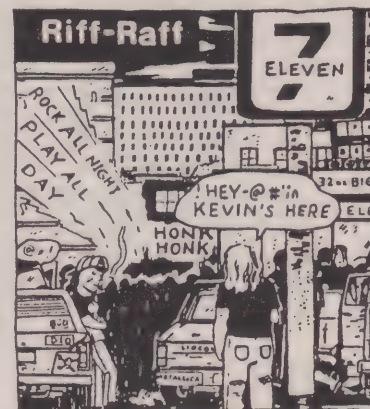
John: All I remember of Sean from college was this crazy drunk guy in a white leather jacket, this total wild man. Because that's what he was like the one time I met him. Then we ask him to be in our band and he gives us a tape of the band he's in, and it's folk. And I'm like, he's not going to want to play with us, this is folk music. And Sean wasn't even playing drums, he was playing all this weird percussion.

Sean: So then I come to try out, and we had rented this rehearsal studio, and they had all these six packs of beer there for me, and I'm like, "I don't drink before I play. I can't do it, I just run out of energy." And it was the first time I had sat down in front of the drums in about three years.

Annie: And now he plays the drums for us.

Sean: And I drink.

Spent have a 3-song EP on Ringers Lactate Records, and John King also publishes *Spleen* fanzine, and since there aren't any clubs in Jersey City to speak of, they frequently play Manhattan and yes, even Hoboken. You can write the band at 25 Duncan Avenue, Jersey City NJ 07304.



Fuck Compton, fuck da Bronx. When Jersey City's in the house, you don't need no other rappers. Word.

And that's about all the jive you're gonna get in this issue. Mad Matt's gone AWOL so this rap column is going to be in English. Word to that, sucker.

Still, since this is the New Jersey issue, it makes sense to point out that Jersey's got one of the hottest and most diverse rap scenes in the country. You got **Naughty By Nature** from East Orange, **Redman** from Newark, and Jersey City? Shit, where do you start? **Double XX Posse**, **P.M. Dawn**, and then there's the whole Flavor Unit crew - **Queen Latifah**, **D-Nice**, **Apache**, **Latee**, **Nikki D**, they all live in Jersey City. Apache and Latee grew up there. Latifah's got the Flavor Unit HQ in a funky old refurbished firehouse in downtown J.C., and the whole Flavor Unit posse includes the **Black Sheep**, **Fu Schnickens**...man, they're huge.

If you don't know the Flavor Unit yet, you're gonna know if soon 'cause there's a **Flavor Unit Records** label now too, and they just released their first big project, *Roll Wit Tha Flava*, a 16-song compilation that's got plenty of fat tracks by the big names, plus a posse of brand new talent that's gonna be all over the charts in no time.

The CD kicks off with Latifah, and while she might be queen of the scene, ironically she's got the weakest track on the lp. "Bring The Flavor, La" has a sassy rap but Latifah raps over a nowhere drum loop and the production's just flat.

Next up is the title single, "Roll Wit Tha Flava," which showcases the Flavor Unit posse. Treach from Naughty kicks it off, followed by Heavy D, Chip Fu from Fu Schnickens, Freddie Foxxx and Dres from the Black Sheep. The beat's phat and it's fun listening to all the m.c.'s trying to outfreestyle one another as they take their turn at the mic. Good production job by D.Nice, who maybe should think about turning to production as a full-time job given the weak track he's turned in himself. "Uuh" gets lost in the shuffle on this album, even though it should be a showcase for the rapper's skills. D.Nice was dropped by Def Jam and is looking for a label - this was his big chance to grab some attention for himself in front of the mic instead of behind the board, but he does a weak rap that's practically a carbon copy of "They Call Me D-Nice" from his first lp.

Way better is the debut cut from the **Bigga Sistas**, some sassy ladies whose "Sounds Of Fatness" has a solid groove and some cool backup vocals and tasty production. These wimmen gonna kick some serious butt, following Latifah's lead of positivist feminist poetry that puts it to the sexist stereotypes in most hip hop.

If I had to pick one serious hit single from this collection, though, that honor would go to **The Almighty R.S.O.**, who debut with "Badd Boyz," a new jack Naughty-styled party anthem with a killer chorus and a verse delivered in Jamaican patois. The cut reminds of Kriss Kross' "Jump" or Naughty's "Hip Hop Hooray." Should be huge.

One thing about Latifah, she's always had this positive image - no gangsta raps, no obscenity. Which makes some of the shit on this compilation so unexpected, like **LeSh-aun's** racy, raunchy "Gimme Head," in which LeShaun and her boyfriend dis each other for not going down.

And while we're on the subject of sex, check out **Brooklyn**

Assault Team's "On The Bone Again," another funny, lewd rap with a phat beat and some hilarious lyrics about being horny and striking out with the ladies.

Then there's **Freddie Foxxx**, the Flavor Unit's resident gangsta, who comes on like Ice Cube with an attitude, growly, gravelly voice and a rap as tough as a Jersey City winter in "Rough Enough."

And that's only the first half of the compilation. You also got **Latee**, on the comeback tip with "Let Yourself Go," his brother **Apache** with the best thing he's cut since "Gangsta Bitch," a track called "Keep It Real" that calls out the Hollywood posers acting like gangstas to sell records. Apache's main squeeze **Nikki D** gets in the action with a hard-boiled she-rap herself, "Freak Out," about a million miles away from the "Daddy's Little Girl" bag that Russell Simmons tried to stuff her in at Def Jam.

You want more? How about a killer track by no less than **Naughty By Nature**, an extended mix of "Roll Wit Tha Flava," and to finish it all up, a sexy dance track by **Zhane**.

This disc has got something for everybody - it's funny, it's funky, it's hard, it's soft, you got your street anthems and your dancefloor grooves, and a posse of new talent that everybody's gonna be talking about by the end of the year. Check it out, brothers and sisters, and remember it was made in Jersey. - Jim Testa



Queen Latifah
Photo by Jim Testa



Scene reports



'Here's a bite of what's doing in the lovely Garden State's punk scene. **Life-time** are still together, after a break, and have new members. They have a new LP



on New Age Records and are planning a summer tour. Joining them will be New Brunswick heroes the **Bouncing Souls**. The Souls are putting out a CD of their material, DIY style.

Resurrection is on hiatus while singer Rob and drummer Chris tour with 108 this summer. Hare bol. Resurrection have an LP forthcoming on New Age as well. **No Escape** have recently reformed, nabbing Dave Crayola of Mr. Thumb for their new drummer, and are playing shows. They've recorded a 7-song 12-inch for Overkill Records in WA. The CD will include their demo as well as compilation tracks. **Mouthpiece** are recording for Overkill as well. Guess they'll have to write more material. They still play Pennsylvania a lot but rarely do shows in New Jersey, especially now that **Middlesex College** is closed for the summer. Middlesex is one of the few colleges in the state that sponsors all-ages hardcore shows open to the general public. They're not well advertised so you usually have to either know the bands who are playing or see a flyer around the New Brunswick-area to find out about them. Middlesex put on a

bunch of good shows this past year: Mouthpiece, Resurrection, and Lifetime played, as well as bands from out of state. Tracy has graduated so new people will be booking the shows next fall.

Rorschach has been playing their bastard metal a lot lately. They're touring for most of the summer, starting in July. They have a new LP which would be out any day on the Gern Blasten label. **Merel** have broken up, but may get together for a posthumous release on Gern. Another band on Gern Blasten is **Native Nod**, with their insane jazzy style, who recently released their first 7-inch on the label. Today puberty, tomorrow the world. Gern is also releasing the new lp by **Sticks & Stones** (whose album on Skene! is finally out and reviewed in this issue), a **1.6 Band** LP and an EP by **One By One**. Sticks And Stones are playing NYC a lot but are still based in NJ. The new lp is really good.

Rumor has it that **Born Against** are moving south, perhaps to Virginia. They were a no-show at a scheduled ABC No Rio appearance in May; although it was general knowledge they wouldn't be there, Neil said they never actually called to cancel. Singer Sam McPheeters' label Veriform has a new **Born Against 10"** out on cassette but not vinyl. Veriform also recently released the **Fear Of Smell compilation**, with Rorschach, Native Nod, and Infest, and spoken word by Eric Wood, Joe Martin, and McPheeters.

No word on a new issue of Sam's fanzine, **Dear Jesus**. Also no word on the long-delayed new issue of **Mindset**, put out by the Rorschach guys. There's been a tough corps of new mosh bands playing shows in NJ, like **Kurbjaw**, **Strength**, and **Krunch**. This scene seems pretty strong. Brunswick locals **Greyhouse** have been playing their emo-style hardcore out a lot lately too. This band shares members with the poppier **Seething Grey**. Both bands



RESURRECTION

have a lot of vinyl coming out soon. Headstrong is another New Brunswick band that's been playing out a lot lately. They have a very D.C./Dag Nasty feel to them. **HWA (Homos With Attitude)** also hail from New Brunswick and play full on noisy homo-core.

Flagman have just released an EP on the Watermark label. People seem to dig



LIFETIME

it. There's no word on **The Horde**. I think it's an ambush. **Girth Crisis**, who play full on powerful "weight-edge" have also been a presence.

The veteran hardcore act **Vision** from Trenton have been playing a bunch of Jersey shows as well. **Hogans Heroes** from Toms River have reunited and did a bunch of shows; people say they've returned to their older style of music.

Holeshot have been making themselves heard a lot, with their thrashy style of NJ hardcore. Five years ago, they would've been on Buy Our Records, home of Adrenalin OD; today, tho, they're doing an EP on Glue Records. Speaking of Buy Our, ex-Bedlam guy and Buy Our dude Lenny Sblendorio has a new band called **Hearse** (all the members supposedly work in a funeral parlor) that's supposed to be excellent. They already have a 7" out on Buy Our you should look for.

The North Jersey Oi! scene has been going strong with bands like **Niblick Henbane**, the **Wretched Ones**, and

Those Unknown. These bands all record for **Headache Records** and usually play together at The Pipeline, an industrial dance club in a seedy part of Newark that has live shows a few times a week. **HLH** is a new label which will release old and lost music from the NY/HC scene. Their first release will be the Collapse ep from NYC.

Zines: **Shoelace** is a Trenton fanzine that covers local music pretty well. **Radio Riot** is my zine, it's a one-page sheet that covers a lot of music as well as personal shit. I also do a radio show on WRSU (88.7 FM) called Radio Riot, playing a lot of hardcore and punk. Pedro from HWA does the Gay Spirit Show so send him any cool homo-core punk to play. Pat Duncan still does his Thursday night punk show on WFMU, with live bands in the studio and lots of cool records. Also doing hardcore is Chris Kelly, whose On The Edge programs also airs Thursday nights on WPSC FM.

Down But Not Out zine is releasing a bumper 80-page issue soon. This zine writes about straight edge and hardcore in an intelligent manner. **Hardware** is edited by veteran scenesters Dave Koenig and Brett Beach. It will have a lot of music as well as stuff on record collecting. **Eye Disease** is a new zine by Tim of Boiling Point zine and No Escape fame. It looks incredible. Sorry to anyone I forgot. - *Mat Gard*

Lifetime/ Glue Records, PO Box 10404, New Brunswick NJ 08906; Bouncing Souls, PO Box 971, New Brunswick NJ 08903; Resurrection, 19 Woodland Dr, Long Valley NJ 07853; No Escape/Eye Disease, 28 Hale #2R, New Brunswick NJ 08901; Rorschach/Mindset/Gern Blandsten, 305 Haywood Dr, Paramus NJ 07652; Born Against/Dear Jesus/Vermiform Records, PO Box 1145, New York NY 10276; Kurbjaw, PO Box 6223, East Brunswick NJ 08816; Strength, PO Box 645, Portland PA 18351; Greyhouse/Seething Grey, 216 Felton Ave, Highland Park NJ 08904; Headstrong, 67 Handy St, New Brunswick NJ 08901; Watermark Records, PO Box 28849, Philadelphia PA 19151; Holeshot, 16 Woodland Ave, Verona NJ 08901; HLH Records, 19 Union St, New Brunswick NJ 08901; WRSU FM/Radio Riot, 126 College Ave, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; Hardware, 2209 Mt Caramel, Toms River NJ 08753; Down But Not Out, 8 E Chestnut St, Bordentown NJ 08753



MOUTHPIECE

Photos by Al Barkley

SOUTH JERSEY

Trash Don't Come Any Whiter

by Joseph Gervasi & Sean Gustilo

BLACKWOOD, NJ - Living in our area of New Jersey, you soon discover that culturally, there's not much going on. It's largely working-class suburban towns whose community centers are not churches or diners, but rather shopping malls and Wal-Marts. Before I "turned punk," I found that all of the exciting stuff was going on in Philadelphia, which is about 15 minutes away. Once I discovered punk around my 16th birthday, Philly became the place to buy Circle Jerks and Misfits t-shirts. Philadelphia is where I saw my first show and where I learned the ropes of being a punk in the late '80's.

Since this is the New Jersey issue of *Jersey Beat*, Sean & I are not going to focus on Philly. Rather, we'll attempt to describe a few places in South Jersey and what they mean to us. We'll always be more a product of the Philly scene, but South Jersey is my home and will probably be so for some time. - Joseph Gervasi

Full Circle Records (279 RD 41, Blackwood) This is, without a doubt, South Jersey's finest independent record store. Besides the usual assortment of commercial stuff, they've got a healthy dose of indie releases (many on vinyl,) plus some 7-inches and zines. Best of all, they usually buy the hideous promos I get from scumbag major labels. (Added bonus: There's a Taco Bell across the street.)

The Paperback Trader (Laurel Hill Plaza, Clementon) I managed to amass 70% of my book collection through the PBT. Everything is half price and you get 1/3 of the cover price for credit for books you bring in. Selection-wise, it's mostly mainstream novels (this is the suburbs,) but occasionally some rare gems like Hoffman, Burroughs, Genet, Ellison, etc. will show up. If for some inexplicable reason, you find yourself in the Blackwood area, go check it out.

Pace (301 N. Westerville Rte 621, Deptford) This is the bulk-goods warehouse store that I work at. On Thursdays and Fridays, they give out shitloads of samples (most of which wouldn't be of interest to you limp-wristed vegetarians) that you can keep coming back to get, provided you're polite and smile a lot. Since I work there (kind of,) they always hook me up. Funny, I never see any other employees doing this. Add 10 food rip-off points.

Joe's Pizza (309 S. Blackhorse Pike, Blackwood) Best fuckin' pizza in B-wood. Fuck corporate bastards like Dominoes (supporters of the Pro-Life [bowel] movement), Pizza Slut, and Little Sleazers. Joe's got cheap pizza, bad kid-art, and pho-

tos of him with various dead animals he hunted and shot. Punk as pepperoni.

My House I hate you. Stay away.

China Panda (IGA Plaza, Blackwood) They makey vewy good chiney food, honorable pun-ka.

Del-Buono's (319 Blackhorse Pike, Haddon Hts) They supply a great deal of the bread, rolls & bagels that are sold in stores throughout South Jersey. By buying from them direct from their awfully hectic bakery (where you see every hot baked-good roll down the assembly line and onto trays and carts), you save big bucks. Plus, if you're a bad egg, you can steal lots because *you* put the stuff into bags, then go up to the counter and tell them how much you have, which they never count because it's too crazy in there. "Yes, I'm carrying three bags, but I decided to just put one bagel in each bag because I heard they stay fresher that way."

Berlin Farmers' Market (Blackwood-Clementon Rd, Berlin) Yee-haw, *the* place to get 8-tracks, 70's "water"-stained porn mags, CAT caps, used Duke Of Hazzard iron-on t-shirts, rusted auto parts, and velvet paintings of Martin Luther King and Elvis. The trash don't get no whiter than that, boy.

Raoul's Army-Navy (right down the street from above) All that Army-Navy shit we love, plus knives, Nazi paraphernalia, and survivalist gear. The Nazi skinheads used to love this store, even tho it's run by a minority with an accent.

Red Barn Bookstores Here is a little chain of adult bookstores located in South Jersey that are quite nifty. Each one has an extensive selection of magazines, ranging from straight to homo to bondage to kink. They also have booths where, for a quarter, one can view a pornographic movie in private for a minute or two. But we now what really goes on in those booths - naughty men doing naughty things to one another. Go figure. Although I haven't checked out the video booths (please, spare me...), here are my evaluations of each franchise based on appearance



and general comfort level:

1. Berlin NJ (Rt 73 No.) This one's not really too happening. It's located next to some country & western bar, so there's always the potential of rowdy drunk hicks wandering in and causing trouble. The booths are next to the magazine area, so you sorta come into contact with the cruisers. This is my least favorite.

2. Gloucester (Rte 130 So.) This one's pretty cool. Very pleasant atmosphere - the booths are located in the back, which is a plus if you don't want to see the guys cruising one another. Most notable for the talkative black cashier who works there nights - he's very friendly and nice. Tell him I said hi if you see him.

3. Egg Harbor Twp. (Rte 30 So.) I've only been to this one a few times. From what I remember, they had a pretty large selection of videos. I guess this one's okay, though a bit cluttered around the magazine area. The booths are out of sight, so it's cool. (by Sean)

The Echelon Mall Don't even think of it, you poser!

The Westmont Movie Theater (aka "The \$1.50 Theater") (Somewhere in Westmont, ok?) Here's where you can see *Passenger 57*, *Aspen Extreme*, and even the Academy Award-winning *Navy Seals* for only a buck fifty, and get a "bottomless" tub of "popcorn" for cheap. Gross, dilapidated theater and obnoxious, intoxicated white trash patrons. Go, act stupid, get stuck to the seats. 100 punk pts.

Highland High School (Church St./Blackwood-Clementon Rd., Blackwood) Need any drugs? Check out my alma mater.

Taco Bell (Rte 47 No., Glassboro; and Clementon-Blackwood Rd., Blackwood) Let's see... I would have to say the one in Glassboro is better simply because they have the soda fountain out in the dining room, which means you can help yourself when the mood strikes you. The one in Blackwood doesn't have that, so you have to wait in line to get refills. Blackwood does have the special deal where if you're a college student and show some ID, you get a free small soda with any purchase. Glassboro doesn't do that. Boo hoo. (by Sean)

The South Jersey Shore A Delaware Valley tradition. The summertime brings people from all over the region down to the beach; for what, I don't know. The three largest resort areas are:



1) Wildwood - It's been a long time since I've been there, but they have a nice boardwalk and big beaches. But the asshole content is incredibly high. Plenty of obnoxious idiots and bars. There must be some connection. Avoid, if possible.

2) Atlantic City - Ugh, this town is so sad! Slums and bright, shiny buildings intertwine to make this a pretty evil place. This is the land of Donald Trump and lost dreams. Enter at your own risk, although they do have the Miss America pageant there.

3) Ocean City - Pretty cool at times, depending on what day and time you go. This is an alcohol-free town, so there aren't that many drunk ka-ka heads around. Plenty of kids & families. Nice boardwalk. Nice beaches. Blow up the Chatterbox. (by Sean)

Blackhorse Motel (Blackhorse Pike, Hilltop) Need a place to fuck in a hurry? Don't mind sharing the bed with some leftover crust? Prepared to speak in sign language to the Indian-only speaking owners? Can't get enough of that Magic Fingers? Well, this is the place for you. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Village Thrift (Rte 130, Airport Circle, in Camden) The Taj of Thrift stores. Housed in what was once a Trader Don's, this HUGE place is worth a visit down from NY. So much stuff, and all so cheap



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because unlike "Vintage Clothing Shops," this stuff is sold to poor people who actually need used clothing (and a few bourgeois middle-class punks, of course.) A fine cross-section of 70's polyester, 80's Chams net shirts and even some newish stuff. Plus, they've got a zillion t-shirts to look through, books, broken records, furniture, jackets, formal wear, "jewelry," stuffed animals, half-priced specials, etc. 500 punk points! (Note: Not one day goes by that I'm not wearing at least one article of clothing I got at Village.)

Gloucester County College (Sewell) Whoever said you can't get into college? Community College is where it's at - cheap tuition and people you thought you'd never see again are some of the pluses. The stigma of going to one and the lack of parking spots are the negatives. Teach yourself. (Sean)

Camden County College (Blackwood) Same as above, but this one is the largest community college in New Jersey, which equals too many people and plenty of dorks. (Sean)

Rowan College Of New Jersey (Glassboro) I think this school isn't that great, but what do I know? Definitely one of the coolest. Plenty of big buildings. If you're looking for prestige, go to Stockton State, Rutgers, or Trenton State instead. (Sean)

Joseph Gervasi edits No Longer A Fanzine, available for \$2 per issue from 142 Frankford Ave, Blackwood NJ 08012. Anyone interested in arranging a tour of scenic South Jersey may also get in touch.

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A Ratfish Summer

About the only thing these four groups have in common is that none of them likes being called a "funk band." Of the innumerable funk outfits that play Manhattan's teeming club circuit and the outlying suburbs, though, these are the groups that play the most often, draw the biggest crowds, and are based in New Jersey.

The funk circuit in New York is pretty well delineated: You start off with gigs at the Underworld, Nightingale's, and the Lion's Den (Stagger Lee is also a popular draw at Desmond's Tavern and Flannery's, two Irish bars that have live music on weekends,) then work your way up to the Wetlands, the club that launched the Spin Doctors. The Illtet are beyond that circuit, headlining larger venues, while the other bands still need the smaller clubs for their bread and butter gigs with an occasional appearance at Wetlands.

SWEET LIZARD ILLTET

Two years ago, they were the biggest band in Hoboken, the group everybody thought would break huge when their long-awaited Warner Bros. album finally came out. The album bombed, though, in large part due to the label's total lack of support (no video, no tour, and damn little press.) The Illtet's combination of hard funk, rap, and rock, with a little reggae and a lot of sweat, can still pack local clubs, drawing a diverse crowd with a lot of heavy slamdance action. The group recently lost its drummer and percussionist, but the rest of the Illtet vows to carry on. "You think we broke up," says lead singer Emilio Zef, "but it's time you woke up." Stay tuned.

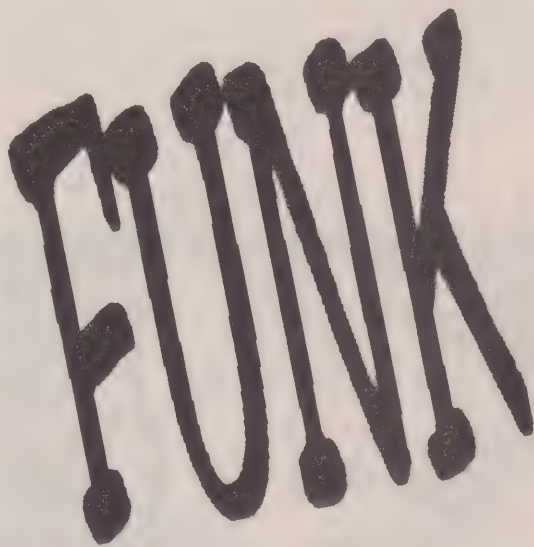


THE SELVES

The most cerebral and collegiate funk group on the scene, the Selves draw most of their audience from the same postadolescent preppie types who pack Hoboken's Live Tonight to see retro-New Wavers like Oral Groove and the Whatnots. The band originally played artsy, post-Velvets rock to small audiences, but turned their career around and became a huge draw when they went funk and added a lot of E-chord riffs to their repertoire.

SCOOPY GROOVE

This funky hard-rock unit has been playing together since



high school; now, they're supporting themselves full-time, playing out several times a week throughout the Greater New York area. Scooby Groove have a harder, grungier sound than the other bands on this list; their audience ranges from college frat-jock types to metalheads to suburban guidos, and they're one of the few funk bands who have successfully crossed over to the metal scene, playing frequently at the Cricket Club, a notorious head-banger hangout. The band's newer material has been downplaying the funk and playing up grungy, Seattlesque hard-rock grooves. There's a new 10-song demo available which the group did not make available to review.

STAGGER LEE

Here's another band that hates to be called "funk." Lead singer J.Butler probably has the best voice in this bunch and can jam with the band's impeccable rhythm section to belt out some great soul and r&b covers. Their original material is probably the weakest of the group, though. Their appeal is mainly to the college crowd.

It is customary for those who wish to gain the favour of a reviewer to endeavour to do so by offering him gifts of these things which they hold most precious, or in which they know the reviewer to take especial delight. With the utmost diligence, I have long pondered & scrutinised the actions of the great, and I now offer the results to Your Highness within the compass of a small volume:

ASSIMILATION - Compilation 12" (Various labels) - Re-Constriction's **DIATRIBE** are the real deal on this here 4 band, 8 song sampler. If you enjoyed their "Nothing" CD's, you'll love the 2 remixes offa here, from there. I really didn't think Diatribe had it in 'em, yet these versions kick all over the CD ones: Stronger rhythms with vocals that sound even better, which is a feat in itself, considering that was a real high point as was! Plus gee-tars kept to a minimum accent the dansehall appeal missing in the tracks' previous forms. If just for DaTrb, seek this limited edition 12". **CHEM LAB's** cuts go 1 for 2; "Codeine..." takes techno's BPM assault and lays one of their distorto-vox on top, quite interesting. As for **SKREW** and **MALHAVOC**, I'm just wondering how the

heavily sequenced, moody, trancey, electro-grooves with ambience to spare from this legendary UK import. Whilst "Didit Sound..." doesn't offer much for the dansefloor, it's a great after hours disc. Perfect for when the clubs shut down and you (& yours?) don't. ****

DIE KRUPPS -)(- (Our Choice) - Altho the gee-tars, live drums & Metallica influences (they even cover "One!") are a little much at times, it's great to hear these Gran-dads of the electroIndustrial sound back at work, (true) work!)(still features the driving keyboard lines and Germanic vocal

inflections they originated (& Nitzer Ebb copped,) while for better or worse, Krupps have updated and now have some KMFDMstyled guitar accents & loops as well. Standouts include: "Disciples of Discipline," "Doppelganger," and "HiTech LoLife," where their Spinal Tap tendencies are kept to a minimum. ****1/2*

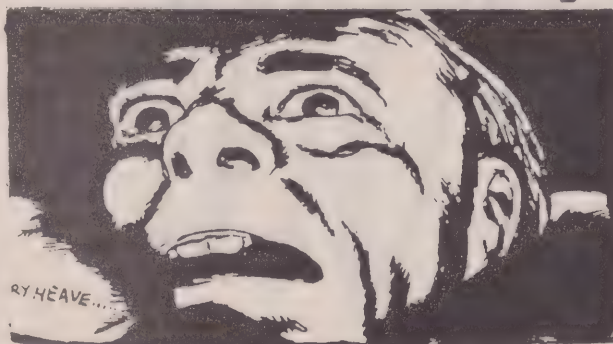
DIGITAL ORGASM - It (DefAmerican) - This disc really kicks sum HiTek butt! "Running Out Of Time" & "Guilty Of Love" are masterpieces of modern Musical Technology. When Belgian music shop owners close up for the evening, this must be how their upper end equipment raves till dawn! D.O. is the creation of Praga Khan & Jade (4U), who have been there from the New Beat beginnings of this thing called "Techno." And although at times some of "It" starts to sound like "Madonna Goes Techno," something will just jump right outta the mixx, hit ya between the eyes, & make it impossible to dismiss D.O. as commercial break-beat house fare. A must have, especially if you're a DJ (or just act like one.) *****+

FEAR FACTORY - Fear Is The Mindkiller (Roadrunner) Everybody's a winner with the new F.F. remakes. Perhaps due to the incredible "Transmutation" by Frontline's Bill&Rhys, this plays more like "pure" Electro-Tech-Industrial than most bands in this genre to begin with! You see as evident on the one "LP" mixx, Fear Factory be a metal outting in IT's true fore. If Ministry sounded as good as "Martyr", which starts things off here, Al-J would not only be Godlike, but truer to his own roots. My pick hit here is "Self Immolation," with its rhythmic vocal loop and signature FLA break beats. Its destination: DanseFloor, but with tons o' edge to please even the most "alternative" of ANY crowd! Imagine Fields Of Nephlim's vox & guitars over T-99's beats and you're hearin it! Another perfect release from the FLA compound! *****

GTO - Love Is Everywhere (NovaMute) - First U.S. release since TrickyDisco, John&Julie and Church of Ex Kids changed the name to Global Techno Organization. You may remember this incarnation as Greater Than One, back when they were putting out on WaxTrax during their heyday. GTO was always two steps ahead of the rest, & it appears as if they're still advancing at astonishing rates. If you had a Rave on the Starship Enterprise and served Electric Kool-Aid, this'd make the perfect soundtrack. Trippy-futuristic-danse-soundz abound. Check it now, or regret it later. ****

INTERMIX - Phaze II (Third Mind/Roadrunner) - A lot of Intermix's Phz2 sounds just like what you'd expect from Bill Leeb & Rhys Fulber, which is a mighty good thing in this case. FrontLine Assembly's "Tactical Neural Implant" sans vocals. Similar brilliant samples, groove-inducing beats and crystal clear production. The overall feel ain't that different

Danse Assembly



by Mick Hale

hell either of 'em ever got signed! Shite in its purest form! Diatribe ****; Others, *1/2

BIG HARD DISC Vol. I (Smash) - Overall, quite an impressive collection of artists/songs on the Island-distributed Smash label, the folks who brought us CRUNCH-O-MATIC and to greater visibility, LaTOUR. "Big, Hard..." kicks off with NYMPHOMANIA, whose "I Want Your Body" rap heterosexistly implies, "All you need right now is the opposite sex;" altogether less offensive is the instrumental mixx included later on, without said rap but with ex-fem-voc sample. **NUKE**, which was (obviously) re-mixed by **DIGITAL BOY**, really gets ya goin with its rhythmic sample and usual DigBoy drive w/ a "Helter Skelter" drum loop to boot! **SKIN UP** could've been a hippy-mid-tempo groover, but the spoken word sample gets REALLY annoying after the 1000th X. **SKNUP's** other track, "Accelerate," a call to ravers to "Up" the tempo, fares much better. LaTour's (Basic Instinct) hit "Blue" retains all its classy hep-Gary Numanesque mood over two mixes. ****

CLOCK DVA - Digital Soundtracks (Contempo/Cargo) - A victory for truth in advertising, this IS just what the title says:

from FLA, but w/o the choking on glass vocals, it's naturally more dansefloor-friendly, or accessible (even!) Which is not to imply "sell out," but if more Alternative

danse acts attained this level of quality muzak, we'd all be better off. Track for track, it's truly one of the best club records of all time, and made by two "industrialists." HA!

*****+

JESUS JONES - Perverse (SBK/EMI) - The two singles off Perverse are unfortunately the weakest cuts, but the most pop-accessible ones, I suppose. That being said, most of JJ's new one plays more like their harder-edged debut than their sophomoric wimps-r-us mega-bomb. Take "Get A Good Thing" or "Magazine" for example, their raw techno aspects pushed up in the mix and all, it's a wonderful thing! Fans of Liquidizer, 'Come on back! ***1/2

KMFDM - Sucks (WaxTrax/TVT 12") - Thank God! KMFDM picks up their BPM's to a listenable pace again. After a brief stint at 16 rpms, they're back on 33.3 & the masses shall rejoice! "Sucks," well, in a word: doesn't. A rockin' backing track with the most cutting piss-take vocal yet. Some of my fave lines (I couldn't resist:) "Our music is sampled/totally fake/it's done by machines/'cause they don't make mistakes." Or how about, "Whatever we tell you/is meant to be crap/ we hate all music/ & especially rap!" Wheew, talk about a swift 1-2 punch. Four mixes in all, and since the label only lists two, you're left to decipher wot's wot here. Two are heavier on the kick/snare roll/syncopation, while the remainder's a little more stripped down, straight ahead. A nice showing for both KMFDM and that revamped WaxTrax/TVT thang. ***1/2

MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO - "Mindstream" re-mixes (Mute 12") - MBM are back from too long a break with a vengeance! The U.K. groove-meisters offer up a real live song here; a hook, a verse, AND a chorus! "Mind..."s reverb-drenched "Peace...Love" sample will surely be mixed into danse records any minute now, much like their "Woo..Alright!" was just a couple of years ago. Most remixes here (aside from the "Stream Of Consciousness" one) are more like vague "reminders" of said track. Most amusing was the whacked-out distorto drum loop provided by the ever-Wakked Aphex Twin. ****

ONLY FOR THE HEADSTRONG - Various artists (FFFR) - Wow! What a compilation! On with it: **ELECTROSET** start things off w/ their incredible re/make-up/date of New Order's mega club hit, "Blue Monday." Not that the SET doesn't add a whole new groove to this affair, they do. A must hear! **EGYPTIAN EMPIRE**, once it finally kicks in, flies by like some break-beat superhero off to rave the day. **UTAH SAINTS'** "Something Good," which we've all heard a kazillion times, still sounds as good as the 1st X, with that Kate Bush sample goin on. **MAXIX'** "Feels Real Good" has that Italian House/piano riff cranking over a "Helter Skelter" styled drum track. **LIFELIKE** takes Depeche Mode's "Master & Servant" sample and sculpts a techno anthem around it...and that's just the 1st 5 (outta 12) Top-Rate Techno tracks here. Do see. *****

OOMPH! "Ich Bin Du" (Futurist/Machinery 12") and "Breathtaker" (Machinery/Berlin) - Up first, the new one, "Breathtaker," an excellently produced piece of mechanical Euro-Body-Muzak with enuff edge to get cut on! KMFDM wishes they sounded this good, too bad there's only two diff



**MIKE
EDWARDS
JESUS JONES**

tracks! Cleaner & more "Americanfriendly" than the older "Ich Bin Du," which has more of a Nitzer's swing to it, mit scary German growls. ****

P NoMo 14 - Various artists (Nova/Mute 12") - Bass rules on this 4-song sampler for Nova Mute's upcoming "Tresor!!" compilation. Trance-inducing tracks from the likes of 3PHASE, DJ HELL, JEFF MILLS & VAINQUER. All feature ambience out the yang, with keys sequenced ta shite, and kick-drums so "deep," Lucifer's gotta have brain damage down there by now! Thee heaviest Euro-tech yet, can't wait for the whole comp. *****+

PRAYER TOWER - Halo (ThirdMind) - I'm so compelled to write this guy off as a "one hit wonder," it's sickening. "Temptation," said hit, cranked like the fully-realized ORIGINAL sounding epic that it was, yet I'm just finding so much of this CD hard to take. It really strikes me as cheezy teen-goth with upper-end equipment as its most redeeming "quality." It's like Terminal Power Syndrome: Great production, clear soundz, and clever samples, but it just doesn't GO anywhere. The first klunker in the ThirdMind/Roadrunner catalog.

STEREO MC's - Connected (Gee Street/Island) - The Stereo MC's have made me actually enjoy listening to music (in its more "traditional" form) again. I can't say enuff good things about this album - it's everything I've been waiting to hear for years now! The whole darn thing just "grooves," flowing like a laidback wall o' hep-attitude. If, like me, you're sick of bands like YBT, House Of Pain and the Beasties taking all the low BPM club play to themselves, get up on this! *****+

SHEEP ON DRUGS - "Motorbike"/"Maryjane" (Smash) - Take some cheezy synth, a fast drum machine, & a matter of fact blasphemous lyrical drone, and you'll approach ShpOnDrugs sound like here. This "Motorbike" is quite the drive-by experience that "Jesus Built AI's Hot Rod" wishes it was; which is to imply alot. If you wanna keep that

techno-BPM goin' & break up the monotony, this'd be a prime cut. Hard & accessible. Check their sarcasm, you'll be so glad you did. ****

SUNSCREAM - O3 (Columbia) When I first saw/heard the vid 4 "Love U More," I pretty much wrote SunScrm off as some pop-rock Manchester types who got ahold of a decent re-mixer & I'd never have to spin 'em in a club or review 'em in these here pages ('cause like so many b4 them, they'd be gone before you could say "club hit.") Boy was I wrong! This "O3" really kicks! Every cut's a danse-floor Mega-groover. Just one listen to the album's 2nd single, "Pressure (Release Me)," will have ya thinkin' female Shamen here. It's THAT infectious and hook happy, while still clinging to the "alternative" rave. "Perfect Motion" is a break-beat wet dream with its loop & "Drowning In Your Love" sample. Get this Now! *****

TECHNOTIC EFFECT - Various artists (ReConstriction/Cargo) - Altho dubbed as a "Hard Techno Comp," joyfully it's more like old school Euro-electro-body muzak. Remember "NewBeat?" T.E. features Ex selections from pricey imports like X-Marks The Pedwalk, Noise Control, and A-Head, so being it's domestic, it's well worth the \$\$\$. Compiled by Zoth Omog guru Talla, the 13 tracks included run the German/Belgian gamut. This is ReConstriction's best yet. A must-own! *****

THE THE - Dusk (Epic) - This album should've been called The The Unplugged. Matt Johnson, chief The, once electronic wizard, master manipulator, seems to have entered a time warp. Dusk is without complete worthlessness, which is to say, it's just OK, but who'd care to listen to, say, Thomas Dolby pluck a gee-tar? Seems Mr. Johnson's under the mistaken impression that he's more than just a nifty (if "tormented") little electronic danse/pop musician. Gone are the infectious grooves & clean production of yesteryear, as they've been replaced by raspy Clapton-like ballads (ich!). Even the Bowie-esque phrasing on most songs has a hard time keeping this Sinking ship afloat. Oh well. *1/2

THIS IS TECHNO Vol. 4 - Various artists (Continuum) - The followup to the "Best selling techno comp of all time" (from the presskit), which I never even heard?!? Anyways, TIT4, despite its lame cover art, does have its high points, like: DJ CARTOON's "Bip-Bip," with its tons o' memory-inducing samples from those daze of youth. SHOK's "Who Cares Who's Dead?" is pretty deadgood, if you can get past the novelty sample. KRUSTY'S KIDS' selection reminds me a helluva lot of "Boing!;" really fast & Rotterdam sounding, the most H/C of the lot. And while ISH's "Revenge" adds a hypnotic industrial feel, Alice's "Don't Be Surprised" has got that Diva house flair, both of which help to round out Vol. 4 nicely. *** 1/2

ULTRAMARINE - "Nightfall In Sweetleaf" (Dali/Mute 12") - A fine EP from the Ultra-camp. 4 numbers that span the trance-floor, from the slower, reggaeish "Geezer" to the faster raggainfluenced remix of "Panther." Best cut by far, however, is the Ultra-remix of "Weird-Gear," kinda Manchester with an Echo "Cutter" sample to boot! ***

RIVIT HEAD CULTURE - Various artists (IIM/Cargo) - Third one for Chase's "If It Moves" indistro-digi-core samplers, and it's yet another success! You might even say it's the

best yet. Standout acts include NON AGGRESSION PACT whose blend of hippity-hoppity beats & samples with harder-edged vocals & sequences wins the most original sounding cut award with "Wicked Painted Sun." CHEM LAB's "Neurozone" pushes the melodic aspects of cyborg-danse about as far as can go, while retaining some sort of "indistro" direction. RAW DOG, which is a SKINNY PUPPY offshoot, offers up the weird-ass slow torture-tech groove that you'd expect from the Ogre Gang. CROCODILE SHOP's "Growing Stronger" is the AgreppoTech anthem the title implies & it's a different mix than on their 12" just released, and I oughta know. Kk's BLUE EYED CHRIST and OUT OUT both contribute tracks/mixes, even better than their previous releases. STG, MAS & SCAR TISSUE even provide indistro-friendly selections. Only about 3 or 4 groups sound WAY outta place, mostly due to their "live" gee-tars. Still, outta 19 tracks, that's a fair ratio, making it one of the better comps to date. (just keep that remote within reach!) ****

YELLO - Essential (Smash) - 16 of Boris & Dieter's greatest. An excellent sampling of Yello's work over the '85-'92 period. Though the only bona fide "hits" are "Oh Yeah (Ferris)," "I Love You (I Know)," and "Bostich" (a more dansey mix would've been nice,) this CD is a mighty fine listen nuntheless. ***

Danse Assembly Top Twelve

Fridays at The Roxy, New Brunswick

1. STEREO MCs - "Connected" / "Step It Up"
2. SUNSCREAM - "LuvUMore"/"Pressure"
3. MEAT BEAT - "Mindstream"
4. DIGITAL ORGASM - "Time/Love/Mood"
5. INTERMIX - "Dream/Monument/Down&"
6. JESUS JONES - "Good Thing"/"Right Decision"
7. DURAN DURAN - ""Come Undone"/"2Much InFo"
8. FRONTLINE ASSEMBLY - "The Blade" (remx)
9. SHEEP ON DRUGS - "Motorbike"
10. CONSOLIDATED - "Tool & Die" (rmx)
11. ALPHA TEAM - "Speed" (h/cmix)
12. EON - "Basketcase"

On DURAN DURAN (Capitol), they continue to walk that fine line btwn "hip" and camp/mainstream. As commercial as they wanna be, Nick, Simon & John prove they're still as anxious as ever to get outta that stadium & back home to watch their Warhol films (while listening to those scratched up Velvets records, of course!) With Songs Of Faith (Sire,) DEPECHE MODE take a giant dive into the cesspool of the overblown. Flood hands over a case study in Overproduction here & should be more than a little ashamed. PLEASE continue to send your danse/ industrial / alternative / techno / electronic muzak (CD or vinyl, please) to me c/o Danse Assembly Productions, 126 Montgomery St Box 3F, Highland Pk NJ 08904, or you can visit me at The Roxy (Rt 27, New Brunswick) any Friday when I present the "audio" form of this column as I DJ. C-Ya!

Wednesday, February 18

Mick and I picked up the new issue from the Linco Printing in Long Island

special little world with its own reality. Welcome to Punk Rock.

Tonight there was a major row going

Since nobody asked me, I didn't get into the argument, but a couple of things did run through my head (of

Confessions Of A Club Rat

by Jim Testa



City today. I celebrated that night by stuffing envelopes and licking stamps that night.

Thursday, February 19

For the 48th time tonight, I took the new issue to Maxwell's for its first public appearance. Ten years ago, when Jersey Beat started, that made a lot of sense; back then, Maxwell's was always full of all my friends, cool bands, the guys from New York Rocker that I wanted to impress... Tonight's a little different. The only people I know in the place are Chris at the door and Dave P. behind the bar, and the bill is nothing special: Michele Malone, a Janis Joplin-wannabe, some rockabilly singer named James Intveld, and a local band called Total Identity Crisis. Malone (who used to be on Arista) goes on way too long, as does Intveld, who pads half his set with covers and plays a good hour, even though he only managed to draw four people (two couples, both of whom jitterbugged through the set.) T.I.C. are okay, although hardly original; I later learned that one of them lives upstairs from the club, which is obviously how they got to headline a show. They reminded me a lot of another Maxwell's house band, Sound Of Skin -- hard-eged alternametal influenced by Nine Inch Nails and Jane's Addiction, with a little U2 pomposity thrown in courtesy of the lead singer's overdone vocals. They were good enough that I'd probably see them again if the occasion arose, but not good enough to get me excited about the prospect.

Friday, February 19

I love ABC No Rio. Outside its doors, there's the worst part of the Lower East Side - poverty, filth, drugs, rats, decaying buildings packed with poor people with no place else to go. Step inside, though, and it's like getting whisked away to Oz. You're suddenly in a

on about a show that had happened a few weeks before. It seems Hell No and some other bands booked a show at The Spiral, a bar on First Street. Since it's a bar, it's technically a "Over 21 only" type of place, but in the past, the manager allowed minors in to see the bands as long as they stayed away from the bar and didn't try to buy beer. At this show, though, he wouldn't budge, and about 15 underagers got turned away, and the bands played the show to anyone who had been smart enough to bring a fake ID and could stay. Chris Jensen, a hitherto anonymous No Rio regular, didn't like

course). First, since it was a bar, anyone who went there without proof of 21 should have been smart enough to realize that they might be turned away. If that meant risking \$10 in Metro North tickets, maybe it would have been a good show to skip. (Shit, I don't drive and there are a lot of shows I can't go to. Should I going to condemn every band that plays someplace that's not accessible by bus or train as being unfair to the transportationally disadvantaged?) Secondly, while 15 kids got turned away, more than twice that number got to see the show. If the bands had refused to play,



Hell No

that at all, and in typical ABC No Rio fashion, responded in the only responsible, logical way - he wrote up a flyer and gave them out at the show. The flyer called the bands - especially Hell NO - "cowards" and decried the woeful reality of two punk scenes - one for people who can get into bars legally and one for everybody else.

everybody would have missed out. The sound man and downstairs bartender at The Spiral would have been sent home without getting paid and lost a night's wages. The bands would have been out the cost of the flyers they printed up, as well as all the money it takes getting ready for a gig (new guitar strings, drum sticks, trans-



Noise Culture

portation, etc). I don't like the fact that most shows in NY and NJ have age restrictions anymore than this Chris Jensen, but it /s the law, and it's not like the bands booked the showing knowing it was an Over 21 deal. Until that night, they had every reason to think it would be all ages. You weigh the pros and cons and, sure, it's tough those kids got turned away. Life's tough. But it would have hurt more people if the bands had cancelled. Case closed.

Okay, so the show... Shrieking Violet opened, one of the grrl groups that are springing up all over NY. Let's be kind and say that at this point, they have more spirit than talent and give them an A for effort, and move right along. Mike Bullshit, back from a couple months in Europe, put together a new version of Ego, who - like the last version - were charming, earnest, and horribly under-rehearsed all at the same time. But entertaining.

Hell No just seem to get better & better; they're one of the few bands to emerge from the ABC No Rio scene (Born Against is the other I can think of) who could easily take their show on the road and impress any audience in any venue in the country. Angry, loud, tight, and still capable of that distinctively goofy ABC No Rio humor, they rocked. As did Bugout Society, who were merely loud and goofy but always a lot of fun.

Saturday, February 20

I went to Live Tonight in Hoboken tonight and you'll never guess what I found there.

People!

The place was mobbed, more crowded than I had ever seen it, even for the Sweet Lizard Illtet (whom I had always considered the biggest draw at the place.) And for what? The Whatnots and the

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Geffens, two local bands I wouldn't have thought would draw flies in the summer.

It was one of those really creepy audiences too - three hundred men and women packed into a club to see a couple of alternative bands, and there wasn't one guy there with long hair or an earring, not one woman who wasn't wearing either a dress or designer jeans. It was like something out of the *The Stepford Wives*, or the Republican National Convention. It wasn't even a lowbrow frat/jock crowd, like you get at funk band shows. These were just wholesome, middle-class, college-educated young adults out to see some bands. And suddenly, seeing so many of them in one place, I understood who bought all those Eric Clapton *Unplugged* and R.E.M. records.

The Whatnots were exactly what you'd expect given their audience: Pleasant, rapid, obvious, and well-rehearsed, the kind of band that takes pandering to the lowest common denominator as a creative challenge. Central Jersey used to be full of bands like that - I used to call them Original Cover Bands, because all the songs they wrote sounded exactly like someone else - bands like the Rockin' Bricks and the Jitterz and the early Smithereens. The Whatnots were much the same, rehashing familiar bits and

pieces borrowed from R.E.M. (who really have become the alternative Eagles), Joe Jackson, Elvis Costello, and the Knack. It's all very New Wave influenced, which explains the audience's demographics (most of

the Lion's Den, a club in Greenwich Village, to check out a band called Stagger Lee (whose demo I had just reviewed.) I even called the band the night before to verify the gig. But Stagger Lee was smart enough to stay



Holeshot (Photo by Jason Jeneric)

them were teenagers in 1979), but so predictable and unoriginal that they even stole their covers (doing, for instance, Yo La Tengo's version of Blondie's "Dreamin'," and then admitting it!) God must love people with no taste; He made so many of them.

Friday, February 26

Tonight's itinerary involved a visit to

home; I showed up and got to sit through five crappy bands. And now you get to read about them.

I can't really say much about the Shambas, since I only caught their last song. Yet another funk/groove combo, the two guys who sang had good voices but they certainly didn't come across very well on stage. They were still a lot better than the next band, My Favorite Sex, who managed to take equal parts jazz and funk and distill it into mindless drivel. They did a pretty good cover of "I Am The Walrus" for an encore though.

Oral Groove were up next, a slick pop trio whose lead singer sounds exactly like Marshall Crenshaw. I was reminded of that fact constantly because the guy standing next to me *looked* exactly like Marshall Crenshaw. In fact, it probably was Marshall Crenshaw; he'd be the ideal producer for this band. These guys write catchy songs, harmonize well, and seem to know what they're doing, although they're so New Wave that I'm afraid their prospects for commercial success might be limited. Like, say, Marshall Crenshaw's. This band closed with a cover of McCartney's "Junior's Farm," which gives you an idea of how closely their idea of "pop" veers toward bubblegum.

The next band, Gearhead, were so



Muttonhead

heavily into the whole Soundgarden/Pearl Jam thing that they even wore matching gas station attendant's outfits with the band's name sewn on a patch. They weren't bad at what they were doing, it's just that it was almost like watching a Seattle cover band. So I'm thinking, maybe they could change their name to Pearlarden, or Sound Jam, and just as I'm composing a really cruel review in my head, I realize I know two of these guys - the bassist used to be in Skeevy Jeets and the drummer was from Mr. Thumb, both bands I had raved about in these pages.

Which brings us to Fazzjunk, whose funny name is of course a misspelling of Jazzfunk, which is basically what they played. They get a couple of extra points for ethnicity - the black guy on keyboards and a Hispanic singer

Amtrak after work and went to visit my friend Mike Harbin, whom some of you might recall as the bassist in the ultra-emo Pennsylvania band Admiral. Mike was putting a new band together, I hadn't seen him in a long time, and he had just moved into a new house in Silver Spring, so it seemed like a good time for a visit.

We went right from Union Station to the 9:30 Club, which is just about the only real rock club in D.C. It's not a very big place, in fact the main room isn't much bigger than the backroom at Maxwells, but since it's the only game in town, they get a lot of good shows there. Unfortunately, they'd recently instituted a policy of running a lot of good *early* shows there, and by the time we arrived, we had missed the opener, Pond.

they've got the stage presence of wet laundry, but their tunes lack distinctive melodies and riffs.

I spent the next time checking out record stores and meeting Mike's new circle of friends (happily, he'd ditched the self-righteous Positive Force hangers-on he'd fallen in with when he first moved to D.C.) Unfortunately, we ran into a bit of domestic trauma, and got a late start into D.C. for the big show that night, New York's own Born Against playing with Buzzoven and Avail.

Well, let's just say this: It was not a good night. Some idiot booked this show into a tiny coffeeshouse in Georgetown no bigger than ABC No Rio, and when over 100 kids showed up, there were alternates lined up ten deep in the street outside, unable to

get in. I managed to not only get inside the club but actually find a comfortable vantage point, perched on top of a chair. Still, Buzzoven hadn't shown up and we missed Avail, so there was nothing to do but wait for Born Against.

Now, I've always been a big Born Against fan, but I don't think I've seen them for at least six months, since they've been touring a lot and rarely play out in New York anymore. So I wasn't quite ready for what followed. They were touring with a pickup bass player (Tony Joy of Vermin Scum and Moss Icon fame) and a new drummer who looked about

17 years old. And for about the first twenty minutes of their set, the band played these fast hardcore songs that could've been by any one of 100 different punk bands. Where were those brutal Born Against noise jams? What happened to all that angst? Sam McPheeters kept doing this silly little shtick, shaking his arms and legs like he was overexcited, but it stopped being funny after five minutes. Tony almost started a fight, trying to get some big lummoxx to stop slam dancing in the overcrowded, undersized club. McPheeters spent half the set



Born Against

made two more minorities than you usually see at this club. A couple of problems, though - for a band that aspires to a dance groove, everything was too slow, the drummer's a total stiff, and most of the group looks like, well, gas station attendants. I'd junk the lot of them and just keep the singer, who had a great set of pipes, good moves, and a body that - with the right marketing - could easily make him the Hispanic Marky Mark.

Friday, March 5

Sick of New York, I hopped on the

After about thirty minutes of standing stock still, squished on all sides by the throng of fans packed into the place (mostly college guys with bad haircuts, by the way), Buffalo Tom clambered on stage and launched into an electrifying version of "Birdbrain." Unfortunately, that was the last recognizable song they did for a good thirty minutes, or until "Enemy" came along. They played for over an hour, and I have all their albums, but I don't think there were four songs in the set I'd recognize if I heard them again. They're not a bad band, although



Philly's Red Paint People provided a high energy psycho-punk mosh, one of the few good things about Philadelphia (besides the cheesesteaks)

curled up in a fetal crouch on the floor, invisible to four-fifths of the audience. Then finally the band slammed into a monster riff, my ears started bleeding, and a smile finally came to my lips. Here was the Born Against I knew and loved! But they faked me out. It was an instrumental, and a short one at that, and the last song. Twenty-five minutes, wham bam and thank you, suckers. That's not what Born Against is supposed to be about.

Of course, if I'd seen any other punk band hustle its way through a half-hearted, half-assed performance like that, I'd chalk it up to exhaustion and tour-itis. That's the trouble with having a big mouth and espousing a lot of lofty ideals. People start to take you for your word.

Saturday, March 20

Special guest review by Matt Nicolai & Jason Jeneric

Holeshot, Born Against, 1.6 Band, Factory and Affirmative Action at Under Acme, NYC

Holeshot opened the show with a set of fast and melodic hardcore. Unfortunately, they suffered from a common opening-band problem - lack of crowd. Born Against went on second and entertained the crowd with goofy stage antics in order to mock out what they don't like about the hardcore scene. Their music was sloppy and sounded like reworked Black Sabbath to me, but that might be giving them too much credit. 1.6 Band was on next, and they scored big points for origina-

lity and musicianship, but scored low for catchiness. Factory were up next and it was a pleasant surprise to see some people who have been playing music for a while still playing straightforward hardcore instead of going "emo" or metal. Affirmative Action have to be one of the most energetic three-pieces around. Unlike some of the other bands, A.A. seemed to be down to earth and at eye level with the crowd, even though they were on a two-foot stage. Black Train Jack ended the show with a very professional set - it was almost too professional. They had as many roadies on stage as band members! I guess this is to

expected from a band who just got signed to Roadracer. BTJ were poppy and at times sounded like Token Entry and Big Drill car.

This show was put on by an independent promoter named Andrew who put the DIY ethic to work in the middle of New York City. His mom even worked the door! I heard he lost money on this show and had trouble with the club owner, but he's still planning on doing shows elsewhere. It's people like him who keep the scene alive.

Thursday, March 25

Jodi Shapiro talked me into taking



Anthrophobia

Metro North out to Fordham, where she goes to school, to see Hum and the Poster Children at the campus club, Rodrique's. I was expecting some sort of student center or rathskellar, but the place turned out to be a little house plopped onto the center of campus (which is itself plopped into the center of the worst part of the Bronx). You do not know what loud is until you have seen the P-Kids in a wooden acoustic atrocity half the size of a modest suburban rec room, but it was a lot of fun anyway. Hum were cool too, much like the Poster Children's sonic groove but a little more percussive and cutting edge. There couldn't have been more than 50 people in the room at any one time. The PKids got \$900. Long live college gigs.

Friday, March 26

Oh boy, Bash N Pop at Maxwells! I had always been pretty luck in my career as a Replacements fan, catch-

ing a lot of great shows and missing most of the "pussy sets" where they showed up drunk and flopped around stage trying to do covers they didn't know. And I actually liked Tommy Stinson's solo album, so this was a show I didn't want to miss. On the other hand, I didn't want to see the opener, Tommy Keene, a washed up pop diehard who was boring back when he still lived in D.C. back in the early 80's. The public never bought his act, and he remains part of that generation of unmarketable popsters that includes Scott Miller, Mitch Easter, Marshall Crenshaw and Chris Stamey. I timed my arrival perfectly and caught Keene's encore, an okay Big Star cover.

Stinson arrived amid teenybopper screams and raucous applause from all the old Mats fans in the crowd. Tommy looked around the stage, up at the speakers, down at the monitors, and said, "This place hasn't changed much, looks like they still have all the same old stuff." The band sounded

okay, although Stinson has a high, reedy voice made for backup vocals, and listening to him sing lead through an entire set got pretty grating. It doesn't help that all his new songs are rootsy numbers based on the same standard blues changes and locked into 4/4 time. Westerberg wrote a few songs like that too, but he also did "Answering Machine" and "Seen Your Video," and knew a thing or two about dynamics and tempos. Still, Stinson put his heart into it, and you have to feel sorry for the guy. It must be tough going on stage every night knowing that at 26, no matter how good you are, you're never going to be more than a footnote to a chapter of rock 'n' roll history that's already been written.

PHILADELPHIA MUSIC CONFERENCE

April 29 - June 2

There were only three things about this first-time music convention that were any good: Sub-Popper Jonathan Poneman's keynote address, in which he said that music conventions suck, and two of the dozen or so bands I saw. At J.C. Dobbs (one of the city's

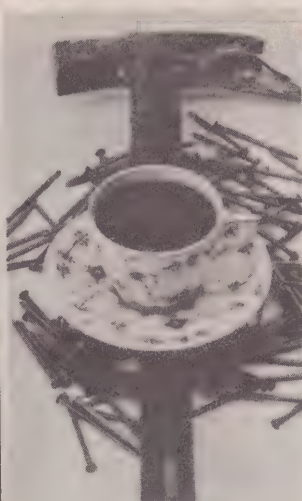
intimate rock spots - it seems like every club in Philly is smaller than Maxwell's!), Red Paint People's frenzied, thrashy rock transformed the front of the stage into seething pandemonium, as the group's mostly young, male fans pummeled each other and caromed off the wooden walls to the psychotic rantings of the group's lean, charismatic lead singer. Way cool shit. They'd be a natural on Touch & Go or AmRep, too bad they're stuck in Philly. Two nights later, Reading, Pennsylvania's Anthrophobia provided the same sort of excitement, with an urgent, bottom-heavy explosion of monster riffs and engaging showmanship that was like discovering the mutant offspring of Cheap Trick and Blue Oyster Cult. Too hard for pop but too sleek for metal, Anthrophobia provided the perfect antidote to an overdose of Seattle grunge and glam-metal fluff. And it was worth noting that the few industry hotshots at the conference all seemed to be at this show taking notes. (It should also be noted that lead singer Frank Phobia writes for Jersey Beat, so I'm a little biased.)

Saturday, May 8

This looked like a really good show - Muttonhead, a new goof-rock band from Queens with JB writer Bill Lutz on vocals; the always-excellent Garden Variety, NJ punk-rock veterans Sticks & Stones, and the legendary Zero Boys from Indianapolis (whose East Coast tour I helped book, by the way.) The Zero Boys didn't show up (or bother calling to cancel) and neither did the audience; there couldn't have been more than twenty people there all day. Which is a shame. Muttonhead were goofy but fun, Garden Variety are just one of the BEST bands in

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the whole tri-state area, and why they can't get better bookings, management, a record deal, etc. is beyond me, and Sticks & Stones provided their usual shrill but emphatic angst-rock to the proceedings. (Note to Zero Boy Paul Mahearn - next time you or one of your friends call asking for a favor, you can bite me.)

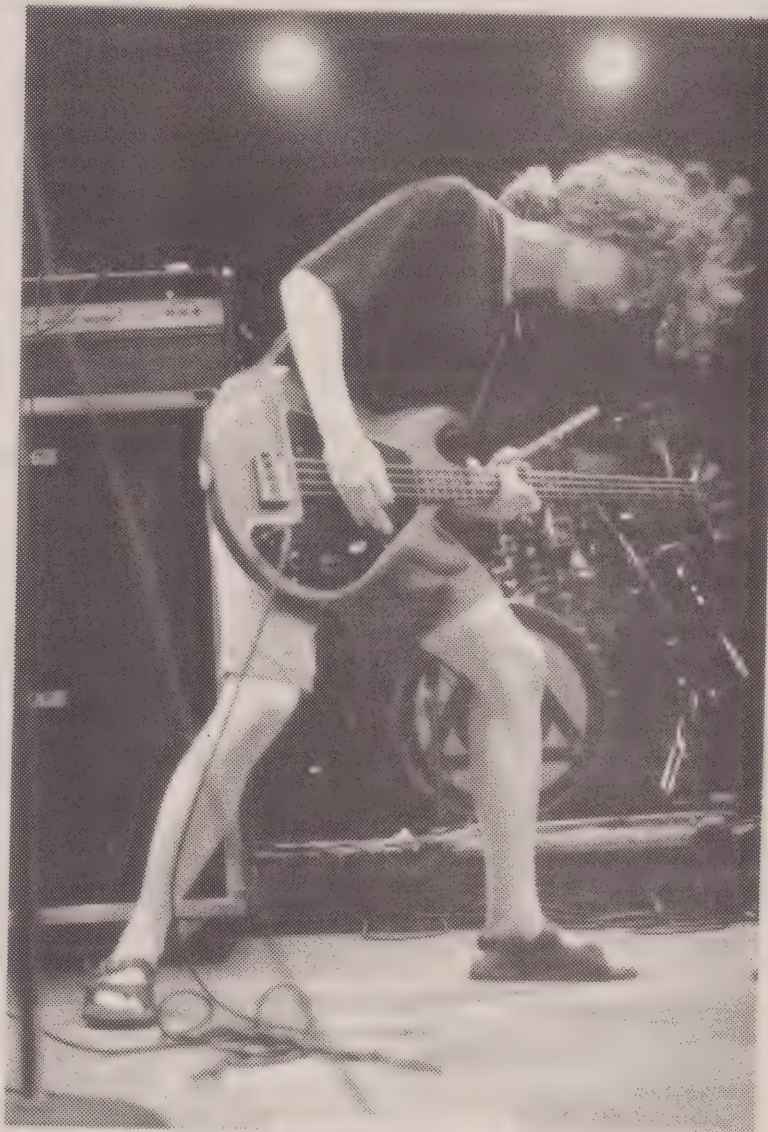
May 15, May 22 and May 24, all at ABC No Rio

You could put together an amazing lineup just with the bands who didn't show up at these three shows: Born Against, Bad Dreamhouse, Sick N Tired, The Hush-In, and 8-Bark. 8-Bark's van died in Pittsburry, a few were lost in action, and Born Against didn't even bother to call (although a week later they were on the road and playing shows in other cities.) Go figure.

Of course, the audience didn't bother to show up for any of these dates either, which is a pity, because they missed some really cool bands. On May 15, billed as "Attack Of The Killer B's," Bugout Society barbecued burgers in the backyard while Bad Trip and the Bezerkers from Long Island played some potent Old School mosh-core for about a dozen people down in the basement. On the 22nd, Human Oddities from Florida played some intense and entertaining noisecore, dressed up in aluminum spaceman outfits even though there were only about six people there. Hoieshot had played earlier to a slightly larger crowd, with their good if somewhat generic NJ hardcore punk. At the 8-Bark show without 8-Bark, the turnout was even smaller, but Natural Cause from Madison, WI and Dogfight from Minneapolis showed how you can extend the boundaries of punk way beyond the old three-chord slamarama and still come up with the amazingly cool music. Natural Cause play jazzy punk/noise with a dreadlocked lead singer who screams hysterically through the whole set. Dogfight do it without guitars - just bass, drums, and sax, playing a weird jazzy punk hybrid that's something like Plaid Retina meets Capt. Beefheart. Three guys and a gal, two saxophones, some nifty percussion... catch them if they come to your town. (Dogfight reported that they had caught up with the 8-Bark/Born Against tour caravan on the road and could have played

some shows with them, but "Sam McPheeters didn't want any more out-of-town bands on the bill with them." What the hell has gotten into that guy?) All the bands did great sets despite the poor turnouts, too. When

are the all "scenesters" at ABC No-Rio going to start supporting the shows there, even when there isn't some big-name, politically-correct punk band on the bill?



Rose, Poster Children

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Hey There! Frayed On The Edges has returned for its third installment. A lot of music has come my way, especially from unsigned bands and independent labels. Again I have tried to fit as many bands as possible here as well as a good variety of musical styles. Enjoy reading the reviews and I hope that you can find something that will interest you. If anyone wants to get in touch the address is: Hayley Greif, P.O. Box 215, Hightstown, NJ 08520.

Though their name means random and disconnected, Sweden's DESULTORY is anything but. The band has released a solid, well-produced 9 song CD on Metal Blade Records entitled Into Eternity. Desultory is a four-piece death metal band that doesn't just want to be another band from Sweden, but to stand on their own. They have done this with songs like "Passed Away", "Twisted Emotions", "Forever Gone" and the title track. The songs are aggressive and heavy, yet melodic, with some employing riffs reminiscent of bands like Slayer and Fates Warning for an interesting mix. Desultory has released a great first effort that I liked upon the first listen and is now one of my favorites. Definitely check these guys out - they have a bright future ahead of them, far into eternity.

1993 marks the beginning of a new era in SAVATAGE history. Lead vocalist Jon Oliva has left the band to pursue other projects, though his presence is still felt on the band's latest Atlantic release. He plays all the piano and keyboards, co-produced and co-wrote the songs on Edge of Thorns. Edge of Thorns holds true to the signature Savatage sound and new vocalist Zachary Stevens, from the Boston based band Wicked Witch, fits in well. Stevens is not a Oliva clone and has his own singing style that resembles Geoff Tate at places but is on a lower register. All the songs are good with the standouts to me being "He Carves His Stone", "Skraggy's Tomb", "Degrees of Sanity" and the title track. Being a Savatage fan for some time now, I was anxious to hear the new release, even though Jon was no longer in the band. I'm glad that I did because it is one of the best I've heard this year. Savatage is starting a new chapter in their 12 year history and I hope to be reading the book for a long time to come.

Welcome to the world of PLANET DREAD, a North Jersey based band that has released a self-titled four song CD. The inhabitants of this land include Dan Iannuzzelli (drums), Dave Schlosser (bass), Matt Boroff and Jerry Dale (guitars), and John (vocals). I had heard a couple of the songs on the CD, the ballad "Promises" and the upbeat, catchy "What We See" (my fave on the disc) from a penpal. Musically Planet Dread is a hard rock band that has many moods on the disc: from upbeat, to psychedelic, to mellow, for example. John's vocals fit the music well and helps set the tone for each song. The lyrics are intelligent, each one telling a story of dealing with life. Though the world is called Planet Dread, the theme of hope runs through each song. If you'd like to take a trip and discover another world, write to Planet Dread: c/o Chonus Productions, 343 Cortland St., Belleville, NJ 07109 or call (201)751-5300.

Do violins and death metal mix? According to the band AT THE GATES, they do. The band has a violinist included in the lineup on their latest release The Red In The Sky Is

Ours. Originally released last year on Deaf Records in England, it is available here on Grindcore International. The addition of the violinist gives At The Gates a distinctive

sound in the death metal world. It is like a beautiful cacophony: harsh, gruff, heavy vocals and music with the light, pretty sounds of the violin. The songs on the release are all great and each can stand on its own. The titles include "Kingdom Come", "Windows", "Nowhere", and "City of Screaming Statues". The Red In The Sky Is Ours is an exciting release that successfully tests the limits of death metal by using the violin as an important instrument to define the band's sound without sacrificing any of the heaviness. If you're looking for something a little different than the mainstream death metal, then I highly recommend that you get a copy of At The Gates. It'll be an experience you won't soon forget.

FRAYED AT THE E D G E S BY HAYLEY GREIF

What do you get when you mix different types of music together? You get the New Jersey based band SYSTEM ADDICT, who have traces of classic rock, funk, thrash, and alternative, among others, on their four song CD release Sickness and Wealth. The band is made up of some veteran musicians: Ed Fuhrman (former guitarist of Hades) and Damon Trotta (former bassist of Non-Fiction) with vocalist Sunshine and drummer Mike Watt rounding out the lineup. System Addict is a band that cannot be put into any classification, as they draw on many different influences. This is evident in the fact that all four of the songs on the CD sound different like "His N Hers", which has a Primus feel to it and "Neutral Spirits", which looks more towards Led Zeppelin. If you are into bands that don't believe in following a set formula for their musical style, then you should consider finding out more about System Addict. For more information: P.O. Box 8064, Paramus, NJ 07653 or call (201)692-1231.

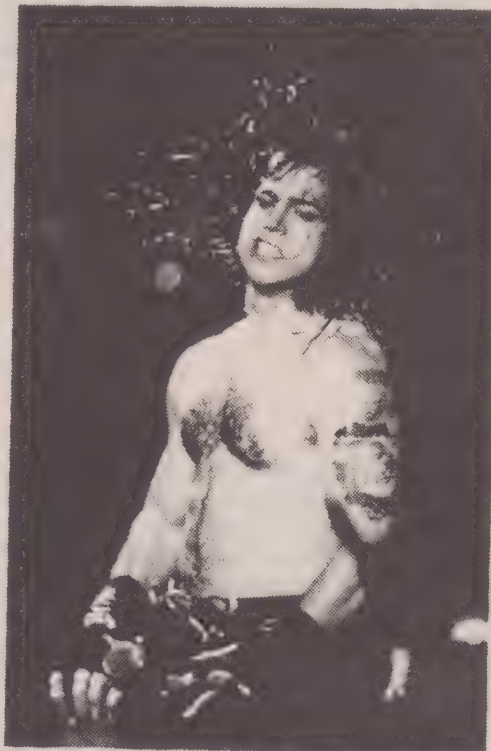
I got a tape of the four song self-titled demo tape of New Jersey's ADVOCATE from a friend of mine and I'm glad I did. Advocate is a four-piece power metal band that consists of Dan Stanley on vocals, Joe Stanley on guitar, Gerard Russoniello on drums, and Jerry Martini on bass. I enjoy power metal bands and Advocate fits in well with the other bands I like. Musically the band is in the vein of Liege Lord and Metal Church with Stanley's vocals being what makes the band stand out. He is a singer that doesn't need to scream or sing really high to be effective, instead he sings in the middle range with the music. The songs on the demo are "Paths of Death", "Save Us", "Do or Die", and "Odyssey" and are all well written especially "Odyssey", which is based on the Homer poem. Advocate is a band that I would recommend if you enjoy power metal and want to hear an up-and-coming new band from this area. To get more information on the band or to find out how to get yourself a copy of the demo write: P.O. Box 396, Avenel, NJ 07001 or look for it in your local record stores.

Hollywood Records is the new home of SACRED REICH, who have their latest release Independent out now. Independent is a heavier record than The American Way, due in part to the addition of new drummer Dave McClain. McClain gives the band a fresh perspective and a stronger edge with his playing. The twelve song tape is full of meaningful lyrics and subjects that the band have addressed in their previous releases but have moved away from much of the political commentary. Songs on the tape include "I Never Said Goodbye", "Just Like That", "Do It", and "Open Book". It's nice to see Sacred Reich back and as heavy as ever. Independent is a worth while investment for the Sacred Reich fan and if you've never heard the band before, this is a good introduction to them.

I've gotten a lot of death metal releases this time out and one of the most interesting is the Roadrunner Records compilation Death's Door II, which is the "follow up" to At Death's Door that was released a couple of years ago. The compilation is a twelve song disc that highlights 11 of the company's new releases and a cover of Kiss's "God of Thunder" by the band Death. Such bands highlighted are the industrial death metal band Fear Factory, with their song "Martyr", lead guitarist James Murphy's band Disincarnate with "Stench of Paradise Burning", Cynic, a band with a big underground following, with the song "Uriboric Forms", one of Germany's heaviest bands Atrocity, with "Unspoken Names", and the mysterious band from Mexico named Brujeria, with the song "Padre Nuestro". I enjoy listening to compilations because they give you a wide range of bands to listen to, as well as what may be the bands of the future. This is one compilation that was definitely worth the listen.

There aren't too many heavy female fronted bands but Brooklyn based FINAL SOLUTION is one of them. On their self-titled five song demo, vocalist/guitarist Kathy Morgan's punkish singing style blends in well with the thrash music. The band also includes guitarist Chris Vitagliano, bassist Michele Gentile, and drummer Pete Vassil. Musically, Final Solution reminds me of old Suicidal Tendencies though Morgan's vocals don't resemble Mike Muir too much. The songs on the tape include "On A Rampage", "America", and the band's title song "Final Solution". Final Solution is a demo that looks to the past for its influences but is also planting a seed that could be the wave of future: more female fronted thrash bands or all female thrash bands. Until then you can get in touch with the band by writing to: 1034-67th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11219.

Keith Nichols (lead vocals/guitar), Greg Bompane (lead guitar), Kevin Brennan (bass), and Tommy Bell (drums), make up the Northern Jersey based band CITY OF SOULS. The band's most recent effort is a eight song EP called Defective Lids, which contains three songs from their first demo and five new songs. Musically, City of Souls combine the sounds of grunge, alternative and hard rock on the EP giving it diversity. On some tracks like "Starin' At The Sun", there is a Motley Crue influence but the next song "Sister Mary" follows the grunge/Seattle sound. Other songs on the EP include "Me, Myself and I", "Thoughtless", and my fave "Kicked In The Teeth (By Reality)". City of Souls is a band that feels there is a need in today's music scene to be a little different, instead of following the "formula" of commercial metal. To find out more about the band or get information on the EP write: c/o Abby Normal Productions,



Glenn Danzig

144 N. Beverwyck Road, #126, Lake Hiawatha, NJ 07034..

England's BENEDICTION, whose former lead singer Barney Greenway now fronts Napalm Death, has returned in 1993 with the release of Transcend The Rubicon on Nuclear Blast/Relapse Records. Transcend The Rubicon is an eleven song trip deep in the heart of death metal. Benediction are one of the best in the genre and show the reason why on songs like "Paradox Alley", "Nightfear", "Face Without Soul", and "Bleakhouse". Reading the lyrics is an experience that when combined with the music and vocals, creates a picture very vivid to the senses. The cover art on the CD is well done and can evoke many different reactions, depending on the person looking at it. I felt like I have above the city, looking down on it in awe and wonder. It is one of those drawings that needs to be seen, as description alone isn't enough. Benediction are back and if Transcend The Rubicon is any indication, they will be here for some time to come.

Want to listen to a catchy, upbeat band? Then QUICK TRIGGER, a four-piece band out of Jackson is for you. I have a four song sampler of the band's 1992 demo release Hardagin-Pink? that includes the songs "Outta Style", and the ballad "...And Then She Cried". The band reminds me of a mix of a lot of different commercial bands, like Poison, Guns N' Roses and Motley Crue, giving them a distinctive sound. Quick Trigger is a tight band that plays well with each other and the vocals compliment the music. This band is radio ready, so maybe you'll be able to hear them on WSOU's Street Patrol or other local radio shows. If you can't find them on the radio, then write to the band to get a copy of their demo at: P.O. Box 757, Jackson, NJ 08527.

6L6 - Demo (PO Box 35376, Brighton MA) This tape is pretty good. The band's thick, rough sound makes it sound bigger than a trio, and I really liked the song "What Have I Done?" A good mix of hardcore and grunge, and I hope to hear more from them. - Bob Byrne

7 TONS - Demo (400 S. Wells, Chicago IL 60607) "Emo-grunge" is the only way I can explain this tape. I can see 7 Tons on Touch & Go or even Sub-Pop. Not too bad but a little boring because no song stands out on this 5 song tape. - Bob B.

d e m o t a p e s

BLACK HAPPY - 4-song demo (% Scott Meyers, PO Box 13247, Spokane WA 99213) Pacific Northwest party music, with an 8-man lineup that includes horns and two drummers, and a killer lead singer who can pry the bottlecaps off beer bottles with an inflection. The songwriting bounces all over the place with a lively, slapdash sense of fun, and without resorting to trite Chili Peppers funk riffs, thank you. Black Happy is apparently hot stuff up in Washington State; their self-released CD has sold over 10,000 copies. - Jim T.

BRAIN POLICE - "Escapement Wheel" (no address) Another industrial band. Lots of screaming and howling vocals with crazy guitar and bass sounds. Generic but worth a listen. - Bob B.

EVERCLEAR - "World Of Noise" Far and away the best demo I've heard in a loong time, Everclear's 14-song tape has a basic grunge-rock guitar sound, but the songwriting, singing, and performances just blow away any comparisons and put these guys in a league of their own. Change of pace tunes like "Pennsylvania Is..." more than hold their own to the faster rock tunes, and you've not heard a more bitter and defiant slacker in your life than the narrator of "Trust Fund," in which the singer casts a jaundiced eye at the Ivory Tower college kids and their middle-class aspirations who are crowding his space. I fully expect to hear big things from this band soon. - Jim T.

EVIL MOTHERS - "Crossdresser" (PO Box 16008, Chicago IL 60616) All I can think about when I listen to this is Ministry and Nine Inch Nails. They're good at what they do but I can't figure out what they're doing. If you like industrial and noise, you might want to check this out; otherwise, stick to your Green Day records. - Bob B.

FOOTSTONE - 3 song demo (78 Stoney Ln, Short Hills NJ) Formerly known as Stickman, this bunch of guys have managed to polish all the rough edges on their sound and come up with three compelling pop songs here. It's tough to review because no obvious comparisons spring to mind, these are just well-crafted tunes, beautifully phrased by vocalist Ralph Malanga (who used to be a bit too show-offy for my taste.) Nice job, let's see where they go from here. -

Jim T.

FOUR LETTER WORD - "Eden" (1 Aberdulais Rd, Gabalfa, Cardiff WALES UK CF4 2PH) This sounds like Slap of Reality meets Helloween, which is actually a good mixture. I really liked the vocals and the production is great. This tape is worth a listen, and the packaging is excellent too. Overall, I'd recommend this to bands of poppy punk with a little metal thrown in. And from Wales, too! - Bob B.

FRED - "Farmer Ricky's Exotic Dance" (PO Box 401, Mt Dora FL 32757) Goofy garage-rock punk, with funny lyrics and a good beat. I'll go to bat for any band that writes a whole song around baseball metaphors, "Summer Time" is good driving around music for the coming warm weather, and in you're looking for inspirational song titles, try "Don't Touch My Brain." - Jim T.

FLOORSHOW - "Numinous As Fuck" (243 W 13 St, New York NY 10003) Gothic rock with that mysterioso guitar sound and harsh, strident vocals, very moody and atmospheric and okay if you like the genre. Frankly, though, I think this stuff would benefit enormously from a livelier beat and a more aggressive drummer, instead of the disjointed, minimalist percussion they use now. - Jim T.

HEARSE - Demo Don't let the name fool you. They're not some deathmetal band from Florida. This band plays great catchy garage punk. The best track is "Twist It Up," which reminds me of the Devil Dogs or New Bomb Turks. I'd definitely check this out. Features some of the guys from the old Buy Our Records crowd; for a bunch of old-timers who work in a funeral home, this is pretty uplifting stuff. - Bob Byrne



1000 YOUNG

KAOS FROM ORDER - 8 song demo (KFO Int'l, 48 W 68 St #8F, New York NY 10023) The cover of this tape shows a fireman's ax crossed with a molotov cocktail, and with a name like Kaos From Order, I was expecting some heavy shit. Surprise, surprise, this is a likeable pop metal band that sounds like early Kiss or Alice Cooper, and just to make sure you know what decade they're into, they even throw in an old Elton John cover. If you don't mind music that's a little dumb and hard to get out of your head, with titles like "Bang Bang Love" and "Girl Can't Help It," you could do worse than banging your head to these tunes. - Jim T.

LOVECRAFT SYMPHONY - "A New Animal" demo (% Michael Chant, 5 Hill Lane, Woodbury NY 08096) I'd call this a metal demo, except the guitars have so much flange on them, they come out more sounding more "alternative" than heavy. Still, lead singer Michael Chant's vocals are pure metal, the guitar solos are concise and tasty, and some of the melodies are intriguing. The lyrics are a little baffling - there's a song about sex that's crude and obvious, then an environmental doomsday piece, then a song about Satan... A symphony indeed. - Jim T.

MUTTONHEAD - "Stoopid" (PO Box 373, Vauxhall NJ 07088) Imagine early Black Flag if a smart, chubby guy from Queens sang lead vocals instead of Henry. Muttonhead features Bill Lutz on vocals, and a growling, roaring madman he is. The band even borrows the call-and-response hook from "Rise Above" for a song, and their sense of humor is straight out of "T.V. Party." Inspirational song title: "I Hate Being In This Band." - Jim T.

SPLATCATS - "Sexorama" (PO Box 755, Buffalo NY 14213) This band has been around for a while (although only singer Shaggy Faust remains from the original lineup) but they don't show any signs of slowing up. This new 13-song release is full of the same gamey garage-rock as always, with lots of double entendre lyrics and funny song titles and a full of killer hooks ("Smile Jenny You're Dead" is great). The band's a little less obviously retro than it used to be, using 60's garage-rock more as a reference point than a rallying cry, and with a good helping of Replacements-style post-punk angst as well (ala' fellow Buffalonians the Goo Goo Dolls.) This sounds good enough to press up as a CD to me, hopefully the band will find a label with the same good taste soon. - Jim T.

STIFF RICHARD - Demo (1323 Bainbridge St, Richmond VA 23224) This tape was a great surprise. They play some of the best rock I've heard in a while. I don't mean "rock" as an insult, they remind me of a punk rock Kiss. This 11 song tape blows away a lot of bands playing the basic 3-chord stuff lately. I highly recommend this. - Bob B.

STONE SOUP - Demo (5355 Pennsylvania Ave No., New Hope MN 55428) A Minneapolis trio who claim to play "rock and roll" - maybe so, but for a band that cites Kiss, Metallica and Husker Du as influences, they don't exactly rock out. This stuff isn't bad, but though the music be as "orgasmic" (as they claim,) it certainly didn't get me off. - Tom B.

SWINGSET - 3 song demo (PO Box 166, Green Village NJ 07935) Two ex-Blisters (Bil on drums, Dennis on gtr) and a gutsy new singer named Hut provide three rock 'em, sock 'em punk tunes with strong melodies and some nice guitar riffs. This stuff tends to be a little more roug-hewn and heavier than the Blisters stuff, more along the lines of Amphetamine Reptile bands only with catchy tunes. - Jim T.

WHITE OUT - "Surf Star Is Dead" 3 song demo (Rim Tim Tim, 485 Tabor St, Long Branch NJ 07740) This stuff is hard to describe; only White Out is a trio, they have a dense, swirling guitar



sound and slightly offkilter vocals. I guess the closest comparison would be the Cure, only with more of a surf beat and New Wavey vocals. Interesting, certainly. I'd like to see a whole set and see how this works on stage. - Jim T.

WORLD WITHOUT END - "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow" (Angel Mgmt, PO Box 246, Jersey City NJ 07306) Very New Wave sounding combo, with bright guitars and high-pitched vocals. "Spy House" is about a real-life psychic phenomenon in South Jersey, nicely rendered here with an atmospheric vocal and a haunting melody. - Jim T.

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The calendar claims it's summer but here it is late May and I need a fire. Trying to till some ground but it's still too wet. Too cold for anything to grow here anyway. Sigh. Got a pile of cassettes this trip. Some direct. Keep 'em coming. Remember, you can send your cassette-only releases for review to me at RR#3, Pugwash, Nova Scotia Canada, B0K 1L0. - Rodney Leighton

ANNIE RAPID (188 Orchard St, NYC 10002) We had a 3-song demo from this very talented lady a couple of issues ago. She's added 3 songs to this tape, as well as some musicians. I dubbed the 3 songs off the first demo onto a C-90 for use in my truck. I believe I'll just add some stuff and have a good truckin' tape.

BLIND PROFET (PO Box 351406, Miami FL 33135) Two-man band doing some basic rock stuff in the foreground, and experimental/industrial noise in the background. Makes for a so-so tape but I bet they would be fun live.

BREATHING ROOM (Steve Mitchell, 9 Gifford Ave #402, Jersey City NJ 07304) Hmm, this was recorded on a TDK tape on a tape player in someone's living room, if I'm any judge. After 7 or 9 runs, I still can't think of a damned thing to say about this trio and their 4-song demo.

DAVID WINDHAM - "So Inclined" (1725B Madison Ave #76, Memphis TN 38104) The former leader of Hoi Polloi, out on his own with help from three guys. Top-notch pop with a strong, cutting alternative edge. Good stuff to listen to but be prepared to think about it afterwards. "Schism She Said" is my fave cut but the entire tape is good.

GEARHEAD - "Fuck Face" demo (201 447-5413) The third song on this tape has lyrics like, "This is how it feels when I get old." I know the feeling. Of course, I THINK they say, in the first song, "fucking up the B hole," which is not among my experiences. Then again, I could be mistaken; there's no lyric sheet and the mix is a bit rough. Overall, really grungy and Seattle-like hard rock with coarse vocals. If the purpose of a demo is to get people interested, they've succeeded; I'd be happy to hear more from this outfit.

THE GEFKENS - "Rabbit Punch" (P.O.S. Records, 105 10th St #1, Hoboken NJ 07030) Semi-commercial pop, I guess, from some guys who used to be in a popular NJ band called The Fundamentals. They come complete with management in Hollywood, no lyric sheet, and a late-night radio sound. This didn't exactly send me into raptures of literary ecstasy so I don't have a lot to say about it, but it was good enough to keep around for future play.

THE GONE TRIBE - "Combos New York...Live!" (47-55 39th Pl #2E, Long Island City NY 11104) I dunno if that address will work but it's on the liner notes. Blues and jazz in a somewhat big band mode. I believe all 16 numbers here are covers, apparently recorded live. Good tape for anyone who likes swing-era shit.

INDUS - "En Route" (Bob & Joy Gamache, PO Box 604, New Monmouth NJ 07748) Joy does the singing (extremely well, too!) and most of the writing. Sort of a hard-edged pop sound - short stories set to music. I had it in the player a good week before I even thought of playing anything else. One of the best tapes I've received in a while, this gets my highest recommendation.

JUDGE NOTHING - "More" (2717 Brown St, Alton IL 62002)

A 6song sampler from this trio who are, of course, looking for a label. I hope they find one. I suspect they'd be dynamite live, especially in clubs where you can bounce off the walls like a dysfunctional moneky. Good rock with a very strong garagey feel.

MICHAEL MASCARO - "Mutts" (PO Box 17, Hampden MA 01036) The liner notes are in English but I have no idea what's on this tape - androids battling Martians, maybe? One of the few tapes I've ever gotten that was banished from my tape player as soon as it clicked off at the end of play one.

THE MILL VALLEY TATERS - "Stratfordized" (426 Highland Ave, Stratford CT 06497) Instrumentals produced via electronic gimmickry. I wonder if this is a sampling of what they play at the Hartford Civic Center during lulls in Hartford Whaler games? Probably not.

THE NEANDERTHALS (1469 N Roosevelt, Fresno CA 93728) Four laid-back guys having fun. Best described as

CASSETTE CULTURE

BY ROD LEIGHTON

humor rock/pop, the three songs are all enjoyable. "I Love U" is close to a normal rock song; "Mariachis In My Head" is wacky and silly, and "I Like Legos (Lincoln Logs Suck)" is wildly humorous. Nice demo.

NOTHING SMELLS QUITE LIKE ELIZABETH - Compilation (Dromedary Records, 50B Circle Dr, Lodi NJ 07644) A virtual cornucopia of NJ alternative rock. Ten bands, ten songs. Oral Groove and Ya-Ne-Zniyoo are the only two I've heard of before. Some others: Melting Hopefuls, Planet Dread, Godspeed, Rosary, Grooveyard. Excellent background tape, I've been playing it while writing and just keep flipping it over and over. A very good compilation showcasing some very promising new bands from the region.

PEE TANKS - "Pro Fun" (Evan Tanner, 1541 Defense Hwy, Gambrills MD 21054) Although Jim reviewed this one in the demo section last ish, I thought a couple of things were worthy of mention: The copy I got direct came in a case with lyrics. I understand it was recorded in 5 hours, which is fairly impressive, getting something this tight, that fast. "Straight Outta Clinton" (the rap song) is actually panning gangsta rap. As it says in the liner notes, "Yes, we are blatantly making fun of ignorant, macho, bullshit gangster rap." The song "Few Red Men" is a protest song for Native Americans.

RULES OF ATTRACTION (32 W Front St, Red Bank NJ 07701) A great collection of entertainment on a 90 min. tape. Too bad they didn't fill the damn thing. Five very good

pop songs an innovative, cute, and ear-catching tune utilizing answering machine messages, a wonderful c&w song...or possibly a parody of country-western...and an instrumental. The main dude is named John Noll. Really good stuff.

SEVEN LAYERS OF PLASTIC - "Buried Beneath" (PO Box 15441, Arlington VA 22215) An excellent 7-song DIY tape from a trio of veteran performers led by Lynne Browne, whose credits included Ded Pet and Elvis Impersonators (shit, with a name like that, they should have hit the big time!) Top notch prog-rock with primarily political/sociological lyrics, well performed. I particularly liked "Mother Hooker," "7LP," and "Friendly Fire." Very good stuff.

SLIGHTLY PSYCHEDELIC - "Mindless Pop" (Box 10141, Rochester NY 14610) Trio looking for and receiving radio airtime. Quite a range of styles, all within the pop/rock spectrum. "Millionaire" is my fave and, in a real change, it's actually the first cut. I've heard lots worse on the radio.

VELCRO SOUL - "Hurt Them A Little" (Ernie Noise Ent., PO Box 203 Str NDG, Montreal Quebec H4A 3P5 Canada) Some Canadians, by God, doing excellent punky humor-rock. They have one song in French (it's probably a law in Quebec!) and nine others. I love "Rock & Roll Reactionary," in which they pan every genre of music ever invented except good ole rock & roll. They're getting some commercial exposure here in Canada. I wish them well.

I received a pile of goodies from Joseph Clipper, the demo king of Jersey City. Nothing really made my toes twitch, but neither was there anything I felt like driving through a wall. A simple request will get you on his mail list; a couple of

bucks for postage will get you a jiffy bag full of tapes from a variety of bands that Clipper either produces or performs with from his rehearsal space/studio in Jersey City, NJ. Except anything at all. The address is Surreal Bismark Productions, PO Box 5253, Jersey City NJ 07305. Here are a few of the tapes he's recently released:

AURAL FIXATION - "Deeper Motives" Much better than the first tape I got from them. Basic punk, but well done. I liked "The Man Inside The Television;" in fact, I liked the entire tape.

BARBARA & JOSEPH CLIPPER - "Sad Songs" Good rockish stuff, with some cuts close to pop. A great title tune.

TONY DRAGOTTI - "Release Me" If this was on a major label, it would be in the Soft Rock section in my Columbia House Tape Club magazine. Good stuff with loads of commercial potential.

EVE'S NOVENA - Alternative rock, somewhere between punk and soft rock. You figure that out!

KIAN BLAISE - "Goodbye Emily" Good rock. The brevity of the review should not demean the value of the tape.

OUT OF OZ - "Distance" Three numbers. Dark, experimental gothicism.

BARBARA & JOSEPH CLIPPER - "Time" Four poppy love songs, almost country. Really good stuff. The lady has a nice voice. For a change, the lead song is the best.

P.A.E.L. - This is Joseph Clipper doing raunchy rap. Like, "No, I'm not gonna put my cock in your pussy." Good filthy fun, which I enjoyed.

BLACK TRAIN JACK MERCHANDISE



Record Reviews

Everything reviewed in this section was received on compact disc, unless otherwise indicated.

700 MILES - *Seven Hundred Miles* (RCA) Very AOR form-fitted modern folk music. This will go over very well with the Pearl Jam/Alice In Chains crowd. My prediction? They'll oust Soul Asylum from the next Clinton/Gore MTV sideshow and Tipper will join in on the skind for a jam or two. - Danny E.

ARCWELDER - *Pull* (Touch & Go) From the eerie guitar beginning of "Truth" to the final song, Arcwelder cast their hypnotic spell, leaving you in bewilderment. I can't explain why I think this is so good, but this 3-piece just creates some scrumptious music. The vocals and music fluidly mix, and in no time the mood is set. Remember how well Husker Du could be melodic and scary at the same time? The songs are usually mid-tempoed and in a sense, mellow, but always strong. Songs like "And Then Again," "Truth," and "Will When You Won't" shine with sheer brilliance, and the others aren't crabcakes either. This is a pick hit. - Tom Angelli

ASHTRAY - *Ashtray* (Shoe, PO Box 29115, Philadelphia PA 19127) I think these folks are from Philly. Songs of that twentysomething lost & adrift generation. A theme of watching trains, being down, and feeling bad pervades this album, but it's by no means a downer, since it's all infectiously listenable (even if most of the songs are about sitting around and doing nothing.) I played it at least a dozen times, with lyrics like "we'll bitch & moan about how poor we are/ and take our clothes off and make each other sweaty," I can't help but like it. - Tom Brebrie

BALD RED LADY - *Dead For Awhile* CD5 (Well Primed) This is the kind of music the Sex Pistols tried to kill in the 70's. Obviously they failed. Pretentious prog-rock and the only good thing I can say about this 3-song CD is that it's less annoying than the band is live. A rare lapse in taste for the usually reliable Well Primed. - Jim T.

BEST KISSERS IN THE WORLD - *Puddin'* (MCA) I'm pretty sure MCA signed these guys on the basis of their Sub-Pop 7-inch, and expected them to be the label's token grunge band. Surprise, surprise, they band went and made a very poppy 5-song CD that owes a lot more to Nick Lowe and Squeeze than it does to Soundgarden and Nirvana. Lots of nice hooks and a very Early 80's new-wavey sound make this an unexpected treat. - Jim T.

BIG BRICK BUILDING - *Pulling The Tents Down* (Buzz) Total garbage. Childish pop smothered in cream de la poop. BBB have a violinist? Overkill, baby, give it a rest. I have no mercy or tolerance for limpy bohemians that shit plastic "art" out of their butts, price it, and claim artistic expression. You have no right! Fuck texture, fuck entrancing composition, fuck melodic beautiful aura... This wilted synthetic toy music is the most horrible of all atrocities known to the ear. They must be stopped! (Greg M.) *Yeah, Greg, but did you like it?* - Ed.]

BIG DRILL CAR - *Toured (A Live Album)* (Headhunter/Cargo) It's hard to figure out exactly where Big Drill Car fit into the scheme of things in the SoCal punk-rock landscape. Dropped from Cruz, too old for Lookout, not quite DIY enough to hold hands with Samiam and Jawbreaker, they're like the band without a scene. Musically, though, they're easy enough to place, somewhere between All and Green Day's cheese-whiz-pop/punk. This live ep sounds terrific, and on stage is usually where this kind of outfit excels anyway. If you're into the popcore thing, give a listen. - Jim T.

BIG HUNK O' CHEESE - *You're Soaking In It* (Jack, PO Box 885, Bowling Green OH 43402) From the sounds of it, I can imagine that BHOC puts on a pretty swingin' live show, but this doesn't sound like anything that's going to win a lot of fans. They're more or less a guitar-driven, hard-edged working class band with a little artsy overshadowing. Probably very nice to dance to if you have a good deal of hair. - Danny E.

BIG WHEEL - *Slowtown* (Mammoth) Producer Paul Mahearn's found just the right mix to bring out the gritty, unnerving edginess in Peter Searcy's vocals. He hasn't sounded this good since Squirrel Bait, and these tunes of twentysomething angst and yearning make the perfect

vehicle for him. Lyrically, though, this album's such a downer, especially for such a young band; songs of loss and mourning, of missed opportunities and wrong choices ("Pete Rose" becomes an exquisite metaphor for taking the wrong turn in your life), of that rootless Generation X feeling that tomorrow won't be any better ("maybe we'll smile, maybe not/maybe is all I've got in these lazy days.") Maybe it'd help their disappointing career track if they'd write a few happy songs once in a while? - Jim T.

FRANK BLACK - *Frank Black* (Elektra) Yes, the Pixies are gone & forever destined to the Alternative Rock Hall Of Fame in the sky, but Behold! Out of the dirty rubble crawls Frank Black, formerly known as Black Francis, lead crooner of the late Pixies. I can't agree with all the reviews that called this "the next Pixies album;" Frank is definitely doing his own thing here, along with quite a few things that I just can't see working with the Pixies. Of course, old fans won't have much to complain about, and best of all, it's still full of lyrics that make absolutely no sense whatsoever. - Danny E.

BLACK ANGEL'S DEATH SONG - *Sinning With A Policy/The Brett Sessions* CD (Hell Yeah) An L.A. club band that takes its name (but not its style) from the Velvet Underground. This CD consists of more current material on the "Sin" cuts (Summer '92) and older material from the "Brett" sessions. The cuts range from the slow & dreary "What Do You Mean" to the heavier/funkier 60's style "12 Stations Go." Otherwise the sound has a post-modern mentality with roots in Patti Smith and Joy Division. - Tom B.

BLACK DAHLIA - *Nomad* (Funky Mushroom, PO Box 100270, Brooklyn NY 11210) Poetry-writing, all black-wearing, coffee shoppe background music that doesn't make much of an effort to excite. Fails to put a smile on my face. - Danny E.

BONESAW - *Written In Stone* (Nemesis/Cargo) This has to be one of the best hardcore releases I've heard in a long time. Each track is full of energy and very catchy. The only problem is that there's no inlay or lyric sheet. The band used to be called Point Blank, now with (I think) the same lineup but a new name. If you like in-your-face hardcore with heavy bass and guitars, and a moshy beat, this is a must buy. Best thing Nemesis has done in a while. - Bob Byrne

BUTTHOLE SURFERS - *Independent Worm Saloon* (Capitol) Easily the best Butthole recording in years. This time produced by Led Zep's John Paul Jones. How they managed to get him is far beyond me. Sounds real good though. This is also probably the first release since *Locust Abortion Technician* that didn't put me to sleep. In fact, this is quite an entertaining record. You'll see the opening cut "Who Was In My Room Last Night" oh MTV, but the winning cuts are "Chewin' George Lucas' Chocolate" and the brutal and vomit-inducing "Clean It Up." Their last few lp's were a little boring but there are enough good tunes here to keep you guessing how much acid they took to write these songs. And it's good to see that major label stardom hasn't changed them. - John Lisa

CANDY MACHINE - *#25* (Skene, Box 4522, St Paul MN 55104) Baltimore's Candy Machine crank out some nicely perverse skronk-punk with a sardonic edge, but the band's influences - especially Wire, Big Black, and Naked Raygun - often overshadow the group's own personality. They've got all the hard parts down, writing songs that don't all sound alike and coming up with innovative guitar noises that distinguish them from a hundred other noisy bands, so it's a good bet they'll develop a more distinctive and personal style as time goes on. In the meantime, this isn't a bad introduction. - Jim T.

CATHERINE - "Sleepy" EP (March Records, PO Box 578396, Chicago IL 60657) Remember when J Mascis produced the first Buffalo Tom record and it sounded *exactly* like Dinosaur Jr.? Well, Billy Corgan produced this EP and guess what? It sounds *exactly* like Smashing Pumpkins. Not bad if you like psychedelic thrash, but way too derivative for me. - Jim T.

CELL - *Slo Blo* (Geffen) Sounds like "Teen Spirit." Nevermind. - Jim T.

CHOCOLATE USA - *All Jets Are Gonna Fall Today* (Bar None) Julian Koster started out as a child prodigy down in Florida in a band called

Miss America. The pageant people sued, Julian graduate from high school and moved to Athens, and now he fronts a band called Chocolate USA. They're like a Southern version of Sebadoh, with weird tape loops interspersed with minimalist, romantic pop songs sung with childlike innocence (sometimes undercut by a decidedly adult snicker) and sweetened with violin. The coolest sing is "The Feelies Show," about how sad the singer is that he missed the Feelies and how it still haunts him. Somehow, I think the Feelies would approve, even if it is the only song on the album that Koster didn't write. - Jim T.

CHRISTMAS - *Vortex* (Matador) The fact that Christmas has male and female members singing about self-awareness and psychedelia reminds me of The United States of America, but the music is a more modernized, upbeat pop sound with consistently intricate guitar pieces. Nothing particularly catchy but no gimmicks either. Wonderful verse put to a steady flow of rhythm energy that is sure to please any X fan. Also contains amazing artwork by Jim at Fantagraphics. - Greg M.

CLAWHAMMER - *Pablum* (Epitaph) Clawhammer are insanity on vinyl. Who else would be crazy enough to cover an entire Devo lp? *Pablum* is all the weirdness of their past stuff squared, so if you like this, be prepared to search through Ye Olde Record Hut for their old stuff. They're sneakily diverse; that is, their songs all sound like they belong in the same genre, but underneath there lurk hearts of Beefheartian oddness, Blind Lemon Jeffersonian blues or 70's cheese-metal. Jon Wahl's lyrics are twisted, and when he sings, "I'm a godforsaken freak" or "Shittin' Gold Bricks," you believe him. If Clawhammer are a joke band, they're the most *perverse* joke ever told. Now *that's* a compliment. - Jodi S.

THE CLINTS - *Mysterious Clints Tour* (Shattered, 646 S. Detroit Ave, Los Angeles CA 90036) Catchy countryish pop, and while there's nothing extraordinary about this album, it's been sitting around my room for months and I still can't bear to file it away. Everytime I play it, it makes me happy, and that's certainly a good enough reason to like a record. - Jim T.

COLD WATER FLAT - *Listen* (Sonic Bubblegum, PO Box 35504, Brighton MA 02135) This label does a good job of finding new, up and coming Boston-area bands and giving them that all-important first exposure, and Cold Water Flat is another commendable find. The liner notes say that these ten songs were recorded over a span of three years, and since we're talking about Boston, it's probably a safe assumption that they were originally used as demo tapes so that band could get club dates and capitalize on Boston's uniquely supportive local radio scene. My guess is the older songs are the ones with the feisty Huskerish guitars, emo vocals, and snarling, slashing feedback cutting through the mix, while "Everything You Are" shows the band in a more mature, contemplative mode, with its beautifully evocative lyric and haunting melody. - Jim T.

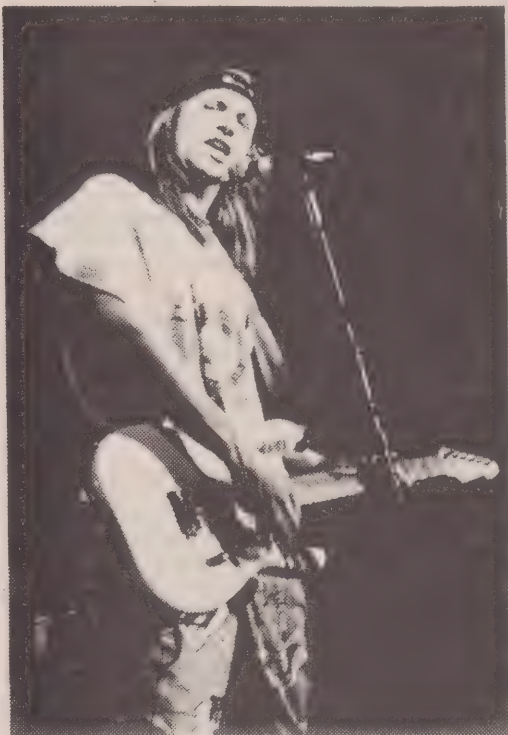
COP SHOOT COP - *Ask Questions Later* (Interscope) Besides the cliché title, the samples and sounds this tyrannasaurus industrial band uses and make are great, even mystical. Each song is different w/ distorted bass grinding along to some pretty catchy melodies. The singer sounds like he's an English/ Southerner/Bowie type after a pack of smokes w/ the band kicking and moving in a 21st Century Bauhaus way. - Dave U.

ELVIS COSTELLO - *The Juliet Letters* (Warner Bros.) Elvis Costello is one of this generation's best songwriters. If you knew that already, then go out and get this record. If you didn't, read on. Elvis has a talent for putting difficult feelings into words, and this record is no exception. The premise sounds a bit corny: putting the contents of letters into musical form. In practice, it comes off without a hitch. Backing Elvis this time is the Brodsky Quartet, a string ensemble from England. The poetic nature of the songs is unspoiled by Elvis' trademark humor, from the bitter "Swine" to the wicked sarcasm of "This Offer Is Unrepeatable." A fine album to begin with, but knowing it's from The Beloved Entertainer makes it that much finer. - Jodi S.

DANDELION - *I Think I'm Going To Be Sick* (cassette) (Ruffhouse) After listening to this tape, I thought that I was going to be sick. This band is the biggest Nirvana clone you'd ever want to hear (and they were the



BAD RELIGION (Photo by Shawn Scallen)



GOO GOO DOLLS (Photo by Shawn)

one big "signed" band at the Philadelphia Music Conference, which doesn't say a lot about Philadelphia's rock scene.) Great production, but stuff like this scares me. - Bob B.

DEEP JIMI & THE ZEP CREAMS - *Funky Dinosaur* (East/West) I wonder what four record they had available in Iceland? Not very original, except for the effort they put into sounding like Led Zeppelin. They should borrow some better records from somebody. - Dave U.

DIG - *Runt* (Wasteland, 1775 Broadway, NY NY 10019) Brain woppin', eye poppin', heavy wah wah rock 'n groove. Four songs that let themselves in to ask questions and stay long enough to pay rent. "Let's write a song about Jesus Christ before the mothership blows/let's write a song about smokin' resin before the mothership blows." Dig have a very hard edge, which they use in an organized, repetitive way which lets you fill in the spaces. Kinda like watching the fuzz station on tv, y'know? Comparisons? A few flights up from Ride and a couple down from Loop. Ride, Dig, Loop, yeah, that's the way it goes. - Greg M.

DILLON FENCE - *Outside In* (Mammoth) Pleasant Southern alternapop, with brisk, breezy vocals and some nice, swirling harmonies. Early R.E.M. is the most obvious comparison, but I'd bet that Dillon Fence (like R.E.M.) also listens to a lot of stuff like the Byrds and Lovin' Spoonful, since there's just a touch of 60's psychedelia mixed into the tracks to brighten things up. - Jim T.

DINOSAUR JR. - *Where You Been* (Sire) I don't know any artist in any genre who appears to work less and produce more than

J. Mascis. With seeming indifference bordering on catatonia, he shrugs and slurs his way through ten songs here, almost all of which ache with such breathtaking beauty, sadness, and emotional fragility that I keep playing it again and again to experience ever nuance. This is going right into my annual Top Ten pile so I'll remember it next January. - Jim T.

DOG FACED HERMANS - *Hum Of Life* (Project A Bomb, Box 4233, St Paul MN 55104) The combination of lead singer Marion's strident, piercing vocals and music that's alternately clanging, jazzy, chaotic, and martial, suggests an unholy marriage between Sinead O'Connor and The Ex. Toss in the fact that the band is from Holland and you've got a totally original and oftentimes captivating and frequently challenging album of experimental punk well worth checking out. I have a feeling this group is going to have a huge buzz in the American underground very soon. - Jim T.

FALSE VIRGINS - *Internal Doll* (Brake Out, 148 W 23 St, #3C, New York NY 10011) NYC pop/noise band doing the Bongwater-type thing without the verb. The singer definitely sounds passionate, sometimes too poppy for me but fun. I like this disc, it has character that you can't buy at a porn shop, or even in Hoboken. - Dave U.

FASTBACKS - *Zucker*, (Sub Pop) Their anthology album, which documented the band from as far back as 1980, was pretty good, but jeez, this is awful. Candy-coated pop with miserable Velveeta vocals. Oh my God, don't make me talk about the ballads, PLEASE! - Greg M.

THE FLUID - *purplemetaltalkmusic* - (Hollywood) The legendary Fluid are alive and kick with the best packaging I've seen in years. The jams, of course, are right on the mark as usual. This disc is certainly worth your money if you go in for the grunge-garage bit; partly because it rocks, and partly because the Fluid have more than paid their dues to the scene, and deserve any recognition they might get now that their kind of music is so commercial. - Danny E.

FORTYFOUR SUNSETS - *Will Days Return* (Dinkus Disks, PO Box 3051, Hoboken NJ 07030) This disk collects tracks from six different sessions spanning, believe it or not, seven years; and yet, covering Hoboken for all that time, I'd never heard of the band until this CD was released. The group plays unassuming, self-confessional pop with a lot of effects on the vocals, and while this sounds unkind, I certainly understand why they've been undiscovered for so long. - Jim T.

FUNLAND - *Sweetness* (Arista) This Dallas band's delightful 7-song debut kicks off with "City Of Wet Angels," Anglo-influenced power-pop with a tight touch, and the rest of the CD doesn't disappoint either. There's lots going on here, from

Pete Townsend powerchord crescendos to hummable melodies out of the Squeeze songbook, all of it as cool and breezy as a summer night out by the beach. Uh oh, I'm waxing poetic...just take my word for it, this 'un is short but sweet. - Jim T.

G.G. ALLIN & THE MURDER JUNKIES - *Soundtrack to the Todd Phillips film* (Performance Awareness) Unfortunately, I missed the film and this certainly doesn't come close to providing a substitute. Most of the material here has been previously released or re-recorded, and so most of it is a pointless rehash. The promo copy I received was on CD, which rendered it worthless - to truly appreciate G.G.'s vile, disgusting, demeaning form of art and rebellion, you need to own his previous recordings on vinyl. This soundtrack does have a few surprises and unreleased cuts for the G.G. completist, but it really looks like an exploitative marketing tool to bring the wild man to a wider audience. If you're really interested in what all the G.G. Allin insanity is about, seek out his older LP's like *You Give Love A Bad Name*, *Always Was...*, or if you're particularly courageous, *Freak*, *Faggots*, *Drunks & Junkies*. That's where the real shit is. - John L.

GOO GOO DOLLS - *Superstar CarWash*, (Metal Blade) - This is the Goo Goo Dolls' fourth album and the first one that didn't immediately kick butt on the one that came before. It's not a bad record, but it's hardly an improvement over last year's *Start Me Up*, which was already beginning to sound too much like old Replacements. On *CarWash*,



SCHOOL OF FISH
(Photo by G. Leomporra)

Johnny Goo continues to imitate Paul Westerberg's *Timera* stylistics (even teaming up with him for the album's first single, "We Are The Normal,") indulging in mid-tempo ballads and weepy, introspective poetics. Thank god bassist Robby Goo still kicks butt on his tunes, cranking up the volume and the tempo (and adding a little more ragged edge to the guitars on his cuts.) "Already There" is as good as these guys get, but too much of this sounds overproduced and inhibited. And I miss the goofy covers too. - Jim T.

GORILLA - *Deal With It* - LP (Thrill Jockey, PO Box 1527, New York NY 10009) Back in the mid-80's when NYC was in the middle of a garage rock revival, it seemed like every band in town played Vox guitars and had a Farfisa organ. Nowadays you rarely hear that combination, so this tasty lp was a treat. Gorilla aren't into the retro thing - they don't wear bell bottoms or Beatle haircuts, thank god - but they've got that three chord primal cave stomp garage-rock sound down pat. And the fact that they're from Seattle and are so anti-grunge and so totally unconcerned with sounding so unhip is nice too. Rock n roll, anyone? - Jim T.

GRANT LEE BUFFALO - *Fuzzy* (Slash) Grant Lee Phillips used to be in Shiva Burlesque, if that matters to you. GLB don't sound anything like them. They *do* sound a lot like country music, but the type of country that's not about your wife leaving you or your dog dying. This is heartland country, wide open plains, good country. With a bit of rock thrown in. - Jodi S.

GRIFTERS - *One Sock Missing* - LP (Shangri-La, 1916 Madison Ave, Memphis TN 38104) The Grifters are one of those bands I'd keep hearing about, usually from one of those rabid record collectors who hear every new 7-inch by every obscure regional band in the country and then go bragging about all the cool new bands they've discovered this week. Unfortunately I didn't think this lp delivered on the hype I'd heard at all. This is sloppy, slapdash pop with noisy overtones, kinda like something mid-way between Pavement and Slint

but not nearly as rewarding as either of those bands. - Jim T.

GUMBALL - *Super Tasty* (Columbia) - If you're old enough to remember the Velvet Monkeys, then Gumball will sound instantly familiar, since Don Fleming's been working this same 60's retro-trash formula into the ground since the early 80's. The band names change, the chord changes don't. Rock 'n roll. - Jim T.

HEATMISER - *Dead Air* (Frontier, PO Box 22, Sun Valley CA 91353) This wasn't all that band, in fact I kind of liked it. I like the vocals, kinda high pitched but not whining. Very melodic but still fun. It sounds a little like a D.C. band. Check it out if you find it. - Bob B.

HEDD - *Hedd* (Tripp) The best words to describe this would be "acid metal." These fellows resemble White Zombie or something of that ilk, but there's definitely much more talk about psychedelics than Satan going on here. I think the singer had a distortion pedal hooked into the mike on a few tracks, so the vocals sound pretty cool. The rest is pompous cock rock and boring ballads. - Danny E.

HIS NAME IS ALIVE - *Mouth By Mouth* (4AD) His Name Is Alive hail from Livonia, Michigan, but because they're on 4AD, they get mistaken for a British band. Their first two lp's were works of beautiful bliss: flawless female vocals and dreamy music. There was always an element of noise in their songs (a bit of guitar here, an odd sample there), but it tended to get ignored by critics who were intent on comparing them to the Cocteau Twins. *Mouth By Mouth*, the band's third proper record, sounds more like the new Unrest than Cocteau Twins. The guitar is a lot more prominent, the songs are actually structured, and it's more (gasp!) poppy. A big change from their other stuff, but not disappointing in the least. It'll be interesting to see where they go from here. - Jodi S.

HUMUNGUS - *...A Reason To Care* (Scratched, Box 800767, Dallas TX 75380) Former members of UYUS, Any Three Initials, and Verbal Abuse. So? I cannot believe this crap.

Double bassin', with hardcore/speedmetal guitars and vocalist Nikki Sikki sounds just like old Dee Dee Ramone did on "Wart Hog"... constantly. Yuki! - Greg M.

INSANE JANE - *Each Finger* (Sky) Female vocalist Yellow sounds like Corey Glover... In fact, the whole band sounds like Living Colour. I remember at Lollapalooza 1991, I thanked Living Colour for a very long set...it gave me a chance to check out all the art and information booths. Insane Jane pack their existential angst and daydream prose into one monotonous 15-song disc with no distinct sound or direction. Leaves me unenthusiastic. No, sleepy. - Greg M.

INTO ANOTHER - "Creepy Eepy" (Revelation, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach CA 92615) I can't believe this is on the same label that put out such classics as Gorilla Biscuits, Bold, Youth Of Today, and so many other great straightedge bands. This wasn't just a disappointment, I thought at first it was a joke. From the lame cover art to the lousy music, this is Revelation's worst release. It sounds like Rush mixed in with Black Sabbath and Metallica. The band features Richie of Underdog and Drew from Bold. If you like this kind of stuff, buy it, but I think I'll stay far away from it. It is a pretty creepy E.P. - Bob B.

IOWA BEEF EXPERIENCE - *Personalien* LP (Rave) Being pressed for time, I couldn't get to check this out thoroughly. But from the first song to others aptly titled "Fuck You & The Cum" and "Dope Smokin' Redneck From Cedar Rapids Trapped In An Alternative Reality," I could tell it's dark and grungy (not the trendy type of grunge either.) This could make G.G. Allin crack a smile (or at least show a pencil up his penis.) - Tom A.

JAVELIN BOOT - *The Shwa Sound* (Pravda, 3823 No. Southport, Chicago IL 60613) This is a CD-reissue of the band's 1989 lp, us a 4-song cassette from '88 and three bonus tracks, including a cover of ABBA's "SOS." Javelin Boot seem out of place in the mental impression I have of Austin (home of psychowarp rock.) To avoid the term "college" and Athens, GA comparisons, I'd say Summertime (everything is cool) jingle, reverberating an almost innocent bookworm distinctiveness, fed on love, experience, and nostalgia. I couldn't sit through the entire disc, though. Very harmless, safe for kids. - Greg M.

THE JERKY BOYS - *The Jerky Boys* (Select/Atlantic) There is no music on this tape, but there is something even better - crank phone calls. These are the best I've ever heard. I can listen to this over and over all day. Everyone that I know talks about this tape, too. My favorite calls are "Firecracker Mishap" and "Auto Mechanic." Listen up, jerky, and buy this album and laugh yourself silly. - Bob B.

JOBBERKNOWL - *My Sight* EP (Dr Strange) First off, a little pet peeve of mine: I'm sick of seeing a big photo collage inside an album. Nobody cares, ok? Keep it on the back of your bedroom door. All right... This 10" mini lp purple vinyl, limited to 1000 and hand-numbered... Eighties-styled positive pop punk. Dag Nasty for the Nineties. Monotonous. Inspirational verse: "I think too much on how things have to change." What? AAARRRGGGHH!!!!!! - Greg M.

LES THUGS - *Hungry* (Sub Pop) Now this was a total surprise! A rock and roll band from France on Sub Pop. Next to the Dwarves, his



MISCONCEPTIONS (Photo by Jim Testa)

has to be SubPop's best release in a long time. Very catchy punk rock, unlike what the label has put out in the past. It reminds me a little of early Bad Religion and a little of Chicago's Sludgeworth. The songs range from upbeat to mid-paced with superb backing vocals, great bass and guitars. This is worth checking out. - Bob B.

LIQUOR GIANTS - *You're Always Welcome* (Lucky) With a cool name like Liquor Giants (and Ward Dotson of Pontiac Bros. fame as a member,) you'd think this was going to be a great record. You're right. Where the last Pontiac Bros. record on Frontier fell a little short of expectations, *You're Always Welcome* is beyond expectation. "Just Might Cry," released last year as a single (that I couldn't find), is my favorite song of the year so far. How could you hate a song with a chorus like, "The backseat is my home/ I need a shower or two"? Soundwise, they're akin to Giant Sand, Soul Asylum in a country mood, or maybe even Great Plains. An appealing record no matter who your favorite band is. My pick hit. - Jodi S.

LYRES - *Happy Now...* (Taang) I used to be a big fan of the Lyres, but nowadays, even their non-pareil cover of the Isley Brothers' "Nobody But Me" sounds a little stale. Garage-rock addicts might still enjoy this, since there are a lot of cool covers on this disc, but Jeff Connolly's starting to remind me of the aging pitcher who's lost a couple of seconds off his fastball and needs to start thinking about hanging it up and moving on to something else. - Jim T.

M99 - *Medicine* (Tim Kerr Records, PO Box 42423, Portland OR 97242) This is an all right release, even if it does sound a little too metal. The singing's very hard rock, while the music style varies from upbeat to slower stuff. I think it might just have been overproduced. If you like hard rock with strong female vocals (her photo looks totally demented), check this out. - Bob B.

MADDER ROSE - *Bring It Down* (Seed) Swimming somewhere in the depths of alternative pop, Madder Rose has been stirring up a noise that's been getting a lot of attention in the underground press. Mary

Larson's vocals backed by subdued guitar and combos of melodies made me think of Exene Cervenka's earlier stuff with X on some cuts...but so much for reference points. This band is contemporary, talented, and enjoyable. - Tom B.

THE MEICES - *Greatest Bible Stories Ever Told* (Empty, PO Box 12034, Seattle WA 98102) These are stories that are a lot harsher than the "He Is Risen" animated Bible stories you see hawked on those infomercials. The Meices' stories are pop-punkably tomes, all played at the energy level of a child in need of Ritalin. All the faves are here: "Alex Put Something In His Pocket" and "Don't Eat The Soap," for example. If you dig the Ramones or the Fastbacks, then check out the Meices. - Jodi S.

MILK CULT - *Love God* (Boner/Tupelo) This one really stretches the patience of the listener, but I guess in a good way. Easily the most fucked noise I've heard in quite sometime, jam packed with static, tape loops, and all kinds of non-conventional instruments. It's also really well produced, but I seriously doubt they can pull all this off live. Extremely disturbing cover graphics accompany this CD from hell. - John L.

MIRANDA WARNING - *Twelve Speed Pop Blender* (PO Box 1081, Lowell MA 01853) Very descriptive title. This album is a dozen slightly-better-than-average pop songs. Gotta got 'em some air time. Lately I've been really busy but I've been listening to this one while writing letters, eating meals, washing dishes and hanging out clothes. Great background music for everyday living, if you don't turn it up too loud. - Rodney L.


MISCONCEPTIONS - *Classic* (No Joke, PO Box 665, Stockholm NJ 07460) Dear Mr. A&R Man, Let me lay it out for you. *This* is what college students like. A little funk, a little funk, some classic rock guitar solos (that's for the boys); cast a readymade teen idol as lead singer (Brad Kane, star of stage, screen, and mucho tv commercials); make sure the rest of the band look like they just worked the early show at

Chippendales (that's for the girls), and wrap it all up in romantic melodicism. You have to see this band pack 'em in down in the Village. Amazing. And I have little doubt they're going to be *huge*, unless Brad runs off to Hollywood to do a tv series or something first. And if "Change My Ways" ever becomes a hit single, get ready for a genre I'd never though I'd see - Broadway Showtunes Alternative Rock. - Jim T.


MUFFS - *The Muffs* (Warner Bros.) Lately, riot grrls and diehard indie rockers have taken garage spirit and worked it to death; if I hear one more grrl band that can't play their instruments or sing on key, I'll blow chunks. Happily, the Muffs know that there's a big difference between deliberate primitivism and offhand amateurishness. These gals (and one guy) revel in the groovy, surfy, frolicking sounds of 60's garage rock and get it *right*. Guaranteed to raise a smile and make you dance around the room a few times. - Jim T.

MULE - *Mule* (Quarterstick/Touch & Go) Mule's first lp is another delve into the blues/rock genre that seems to be growing quite popular these days, with the help of regular folk like JOn Spencer Blues Explosion and Railroad Jerk. Just try to sit through the two opening tracks, filled with enough hooks to slice you in half and covered with a scratchy wool blanket of sing-song gruffy vocals that'll make your heart skip a beat. If nothing else, this music is passionate and heartfelt, while being brutal and realistic at the same time. Plus it comes with a little tract-sized comic book detailing the origin of the band, so you really can't go wrong. Danny E.


NEW DUNCAN IMPERIALS - *Loserville* (Pravda) The straw-hatted kings of trash rock are back, handing out sparklers as they saunter to the stage to ring out their favorite Tom Jones tunes, "It's Not Unusual." *Loserville* is the infamous third lp, which was pulled straight out of the butts of Skipper, Pigtail Dick, and Goodtime. You'll forget all about the likes of Mojo Nixon and Horton Heat when you hear these open-pit BBQ eatin' hoe-downs like "Daddy Ran The Tilt O Whirl," "Haircut And New Shoes," and "Loving You Is Like Running With A Fork In My Mouth Down A Really Steep Hill, Blindfolded." The warped out reading of Rush's "Tom Sawyer" is a classic in its own right. All you buck snortin' turkey



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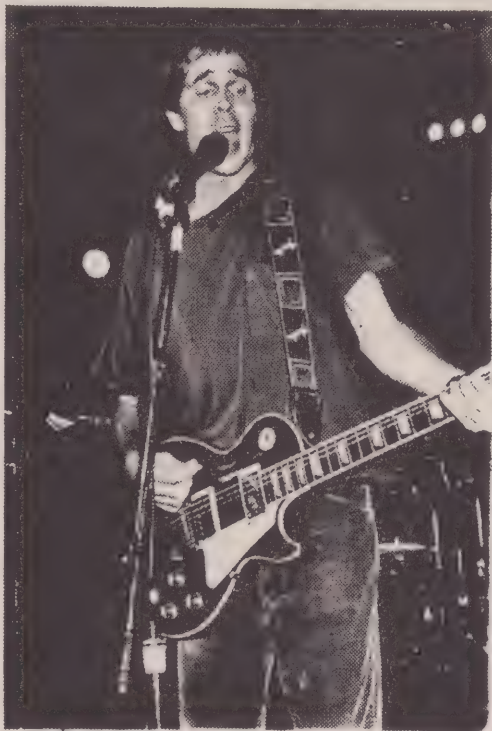
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QUICKSAND (Photo by Shawn Scallen)

necks, give NDI your hard-earned cash and prepare to square-mosh. - Greg M.

NIRVANA - *Incesticide* (Geffen) A collection of B sides, outtakes, live cuts, something from their Sub Pop record, and other leftovers. This actually works much better as an album than I thought it would, and a lot of these songs are quite nearly the equal of the killer stuff on *Nevermind*. But of course, I didn't pay for my copy. And isn't this sort exploitative rehash the kind of shit a major label usually releases *after* a hit band breaks up? - Jim T.

ORANGUTANG - *The Rewards Of Cruelty* (Imago) This disc starts out with sort of a plodding Suicidal Tendencies mosh, but don't give up! Skip to the next track. Orangutang come forth with their true colors and blast hard-edged music with some nice melodic nuances and interesting vocalizing. At their best, Orangutang are a more-than-competent Faith No More, but at their worst, they're just boring run of the mill metal. Maybe their next release will be a little more focused. - Jamie T.

POLVO - *Today's Active Lifestyles* - LP (Merge) Dissonant, distorto-guitar mush by a couple of college graduates who think they're hot shit because they know Superchunk. We are not impressed. - Jim T.

POND - *Pond* (Sub Pop) While I hate with a passion endorsing anything Caroline releases, I must admit this is one truly satisfying offering. Pond's earlier Sub Pop single whet my appetite for more of this beautiful, distorted pop music. Mildly reminiscent of Bug-era Dino Jr., but not quite as jaded, and the occasional drop of unformatted dissonant noise updates their sound akin to a less experimental Sonic Youth while retaining many convincing harmonies. All of this comes bound together by excellent sound production, making Pond's debut lp a release worth spending your hard earned money on. - John L.

POSTER CHILDREN - *Tool Of The Man* (Sire) The P-Kids' first real album for their major label lends an interesting twist to their sound; for the first time, the guitars and bass have been toned down and pushed to the rear of the mix, so that you can actually hear Rick's vocals. This immediately adds two new dimensions to the Poster Children's oeuvre: lyrics and melody. Both of them were always there, it's just that you could never hear them before under all that guitar noise. It turns out I actually like Rick's voice, which has a nice ironic twist and ably delivers

the band's oblique and cheeky lyrics. And you can still bang your head to this and get lost in the groove if you turn it up loud enough, which has always been this band's greatest charm. - Jim T.

QUICKSAND - *Slip* (Polygram) Walter Schreifels' screams of pain and rage fuel the full-on intensity of Quicksand's major label debut, for my money the most consistently powerful, emotional, and rockin' album of the year. Guitars and bass erupt like Krakatoa, spewing molten chunks of rock and metal in all directions. New York hardcore will never be the same; for the first time in a generation, the scene has a band to live up to. How many kids will hear this and start their own punk band? How many other bands will hear this and say of themselves, we can do better? A lot, I hope. An awful lot. - Jim T.

RATTLED ROOSTERS - *Year Of The Rooster* (1399 Fountain Way #605, Vancouver BC Canada V6H 3T3) Last year, the CBC ran a program called "Ear To The Ground," which featured new punk and underground bands like Barenaked Ladies and Mae Moore. Since I rarely turn on my tv except to watch hockey, I missed most of it, but if this group was not on that program, they should have been. It's neat how difficult it is to categorize this album; it ranges from pure punk to pure country. Comparisons? Barenaked Ladies and Blue Rodeo come to mind, but ultimately the Rattled Roosters have a sound all their own, and I highly recommend them. - Rodney L.

REVEREND HORTON HEAT - *The Full Custom Gospel Sounds Of...* (Sub Pop) Foot-stompin', whiskey-drinkin', honky-tonkyin' blues, with a peppery wit and a foot in the gutter. This falls somewhere between Delbert McClinton and Mojo Nixon, in terms of how seriously the band takes itself and the songs, but it's a helluva lot more than just a novelty act, and if you like gutbucket country blues, this stuff is rockin'. - Jim T.

RKL - *Reactivate* (Epitaph) I was never an RKL fan from the start and this release doesn't change my mind. The same old funky pop punk as always. Sounds a lot like Living Colour. Way too much. Old RKL fans will love this but I don't think they'll make many new fans with it. - Bob B.

ROSARY VIOLET - *Rosary Violet* (Diablo, PO Box 961, Jamaica NY 11430) Spooky gothic rock, best summed up by their reputable cover of Bauhaus' "Bela Lugosi's Dead." Okay if you like this grinding atmospheric stuff, but it's not a genre that's ever really interested me, so I'll pass. - Jim T.

SCHOOL OF FISH - *Human Cannonball* (Atlantic) - If you remember this band's one hit tune from their first album, "Three Strange Days," then you know what this lp sounds like: Murky, swirly, psychedelic melodies delivered in a plaintive, slightly whiney voice. The guitars seem to have a little more bite this time around, but the songwriting rarely rises above the pedestrian, and I seriously doubt they're going to be able to do much more with this sound unless they throw a few more ideas into the hopper. - Jim T.

SCRUB - *Flatten* (Spyral, Box 8281, Chicago IL 60680) This is crazy, man, I dig this. Matter can neither be created nor destroyed. It just moves around and changes like... Heavy, huh? Just about the same time the Stone Temple Pilots managed to plagiarize every popular Seattle band and get away with it, the first Helmet-sounding band surfaced. I swear Scrub is Helmet with a different singer. They offer plenty of slow, numbing Melvins-esque songs too. Looks like grunge-metal is here to stay. I guess that's not too bad, punk loosened up a bit and heavy metal finally acquired a real soul. *Flatten* should at least say "Thank you Helmet, and Melvins are God" on the cover so as to stop insulting our intelligence. - Greg M.

SEAM - *Kerna*/EP (Matador) Part of the new Touch & Go generation, the vocalist is tender and must rely on the pounding skins and sonic guitar work (just like a quilt) to get the power across. If you're tired of screaming and enjoy slower driving intensity, check out Seam. - Greg M.

SLEEPER - *Time And Tide* (42/X-Mist/Tragic Life, PO Box 060623, Staten Island NY 10603) John Lisa is the only person I know who loves Voivod as passionately as he does Dag Nasty, which is one reason why he writes record reviews for Jersey Beat. But more to the point, it's a big reason why his band Sleeper can so seamlessly segue from frothy pop to a much heavier crunch, guilelessly combining everything they've ever learned from the Hard Ons, Descendents, Dag Nasty, and Doughboys into their own vibrant brand of punk. John Telenko's vocals have never sounded better, bristling with unleashed emotions and prodded by a wealth of catchy riffs. The lyric sheet reveals unsuspected wisdom from these Staten Islanders too. They only look like guidos. Underneath, they're cooler than you are. - Jim T.

SLOPPY SECONDS - *Knock Yer Block Off* (Taang) Green Day who? Let

the whole East Bay fall into the ocean (it's going to as soon as the next big quake hits anyway), who needs 'em as long as we've got Sloppy Seconds. You won't find more slaphappy, speedy, catchy, cheerfully rambunctious, smile-inducing punk tunes anywhere than on this little compact disc. Indiana rules, ok? Get wise, get sloppy. - Jim T.

SPRINGHOUSE - *Postcards From The Arctic* (Caroline) A basic pop/unk trio looking to get radio play. Excellent background music; I've used this one quite a lot to play while reading. It didn't really grab me by the throat or the balls, but I expect and hope they'll be successful. This one will get more play in my house. - Rodney L.

STAND UP - *Stand Up* - LP (Cl, 154 Wilson Dr, Lancaster PA 17603) Emotional, occasionally sappy, but altogether cool hardcore, played with the popper Dag Nasty theory in mind. Lyrics might all have been written for the singer's girlfriend, but hey, I like lots of bands with wuss lyrics. - Mike L.

STEEL POLE BATHTUB - *The Miracle Of Sound In Motion* (Boner) Another installment of totally psycho noise-rock from these Frisco fanatics. A couple of these tracks have already surfaced as singles, although that hardly matters since everything kind of sounds like Freddy Krueger drilling a hole through your brain with a powertool. The sonic equivalent of six cups of black coffee; I tried playing this lying in bed and I wound up staring at the ceiling, a frazzled wreck, until 4 a.m. - Jim T.

STICKS AND STONES - *Theme Song For Nothing* (Skenel) Sticks & Stones have been kicking around the 'NJ/NY hardcore scene for as long as I can remember, and after a couple of EP's and some compilation cuts, they've finally got an album out. And guess what? It totally rocks. And guess what? Nobody cares. Which, with immense irony, is exactly what the title song of this album is all about: "I can't think of much to say that ain't been yelled before," sings frontman

Peter Ventantonio. "Now that I've finally learned to play, there isn't much of a market for me anymore." Okay, so maybe they don't draw much of a crowd at shows, and maybe Peter's shrill vocals do grate on your nerves like fingernails dragged across a blackboard. The songwriting here is killer, with a lot more variety than I'd given them credit for. There are those anthemic Clash punk tunes they've been doing forever, but more sophisticated forays into folk-rock, ballads, and post-R.E.M. guitar-strum too. I wish there was a lyric sheet, though. - Jim T.

SWINGIN' TEENS - *Live @ Hairy Mary's* (Flurry, PO Box 6425, Minneapolis MN 55406) It's been a long time since Johnny Ransom's brought his Swingin' Teens through my neck of the woods, so I'd given the band up for dead. Then along comes this live CD, proving that Johnny and his crew are still tearing up the countryside with their bluesy, kick out the jams power-punk shtick, just like it was still 1974 and the Stooges were still the coolest band on the planet. If you like that Detroit garage-punk sound (MC5, Stooges, etc.) you should find this band before they really disappear for good. - Jim T.

TAR - *Clincher* LP (Touch & Go) This is not my cup of tea, but I can see where people would go crazy over it. Tar play a slower

paced, sometimes upbeat type music, a lot like the newer stuff on Dischord. One side has studio stuff and the flip features great quality live recordings. Worth a listen, especially if you're into the Touch & Go grindy noisecore thing, but I didn't go crazy over it. - Bob B.

TREEPEOPLE - *Just Kidding (C/Z)* I don't know what the point of marring this exception disc with a shitty first song was, but it certainly is annoying. But most of this release is amazingly strong, with Dinosaur Jr. melodies and catchy, energetic punk dancing around. This exuberant rock demands repeated listenings. Try it, you'll like it. - Jamie T.

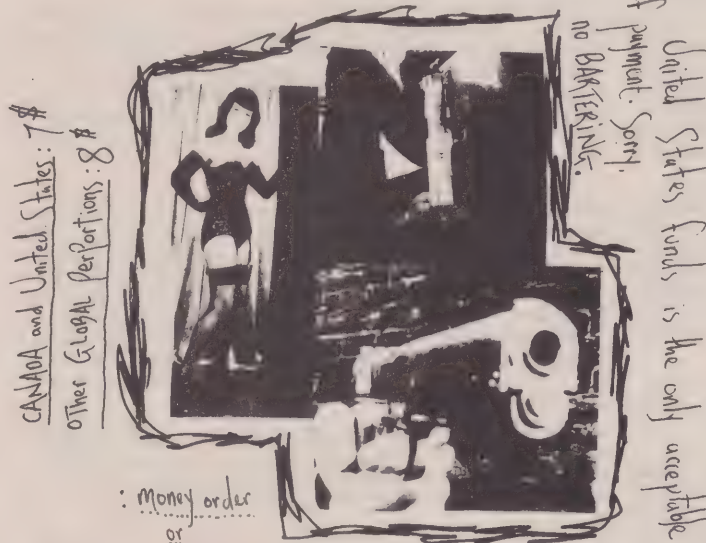
TRIBE 8 - "By The Time We Get To Colorado" 6-song EP/CD (Outpunk, PO Box 170501, San Francisco CA 94117) I wasn't sure what to expect from Tribe 8. I'd heard stories from San Francisco about this wild lesbian punk band and their no-shit politics and frankly, I was expecting some sort of humorless feminist rant. And of course I was dead wrong. Singer Lynn Breedlove can snarl and purr like Patti Smith, her band rocks, and even the heaviest political diatribes come packaged with a side order of wit. The band pumps it up 60's style on the totally rockin' "Lezbophobia," and "11 Party 2 Many" proves as much fun as the Angry Samoans' craziest party tunes. There's a song about how straight feminists try to exclude lesbians from their movement ("we don't get no rights/being buck naked dykes") that should raise a few eyebrows over at NOW, while "Crash Crush" is a good old homo lust song, just like Pansy Division sings about boys. This is just way cool all over, and I can't wait to see them live. - Jim T.

TRIGGERMAN - *Dead Like Me* (Workshed/Cargo) This band should be on Dischord. I'm not saying it's a bad thing that they sound like Jawbox or 411, but it's the kind of release that has to grow on you over a couple of listens. Most songs are mid-paced with personal lyrics, although they get faster with more of a hardcore feel near the end of the album. People into the emo thing will go crazy for this, but I recommend it too. - Bob B.

TSUNAMI - *Deep End* (Simple Machines, PO Box 10290, Arlington VA 22210) There is beauty in sadness, and Tsunami's fragile female vocals and caressing guitars often come close to finding it. But let me digress for a minute into a little diatribe. With a few notable exceptions (Fugazi, Jawbox), this new generation of D.C. bands is starting to make me sick - privileged, preppy children of the upper middle class from Silver Spring and Arlington who don't do anything but whine about how horrible the world is and sing these angst-filled mid-tempo dirges about how fucked up and sad they are. Maybe if I were a moonstruck teen deeply into *Sassy* and Sylvia Plath, all this would appeal to me more, but I wish a few of these bands would lighten up and remember that rock 'n' roll is supposed to be *fun*, for chrissakes. - Jim T.

UNION CARBIDE PRODUCTIONS - *Swing* (Fistpuppet/Cargo) - I love Iggy And The Stooges, don't get me wrong. And I usually like bands strongly influenced by Iggy And The Stooges. But this CD sounds like a band

"THE VULVA CRUNDI" ep as performed by the players in PHALLOCRACY. "e.p. equals ten-inch"



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STEEL POLE BATHTUB (Photo by Jim Testa)

trying to be Iggy And The Stooges, and that violates everything the Stooges stood for.

UNLOVED - *The Unloved* (JRS) Sounds pretty Sunset Blvd. to me, which incidentally is where their record company is located. Not to say that Hollywood hasn't turned out its share of great bands, but nowadays the proverbial Hollywood rock band is a dime a dozen, to say the least, and it's getting old. I say this with the exception of this CD's 11th track, "Fathead," the token three-chord punk song which rocks nonetheless. - Danny E.

VELOCITY GIRL - *Copacetic* (Sub Pop) Ok, ok... "My Forgotten Favorites" was a nice song, but an entire CD's worth of the same thing is really uncalled for. Basically what you get here is 44 minutes of bland, unchallenging woosh with sickeningly sweet female vox. And it's not just me being harsh because this is so mellow; some of my dearest "pop loser" losers pals have gone so far as to say, "This album sucks." Let's call this genre "twirly stuff" and leave it at that. - Mike L.

VOODOO DOLLS - *Not For Sale* - LP (Stanton Park, PO Box 58, Newtonville MA 02160) I try not to use the word "great" lightly. This is great garage rock. How great? If the Voodoo Dolls and NYC's Vacant Lot had a Battle of the Bands for world supremacy, they'd have to hold it on Mt. Olympus. That great. This is the perfect platter for your next party, assuming you don't mind a little broken furniture. You like rock and roll? Buy this. - Jim T.

ZOOM - *Zoom* (Lotuspool) Unfortunately this is not related to the PBS show I grew up watching on Channel 12. This band provides a punkish brand of guitar rockness, which is almost always accompanied by that annoying rap-metal-skater-types-listen-to-this-kind-of-stuff drumbeat. I can't figure out why, but in some places, this band reminds me of Soul Asylum. Most of it is useless garbage, but fun all the same. - Mike L.

BLOOD FROM THE STREETS OF NEW HAVEN (Caffeine Disk, PO Box 3451, New Haven CT 06515) Since I didn't know there were *any* bands in New Haven, this compilation came as both a nice surprise and a

revelation. Not only do you get some entertaining and rockin' cuts here from the sort of grungy guitar bands you'd expect in a college town (VMJ, Dum Dum Boys, Bad Bob Band), but there are also industrial bands, a rap group, twangy pop, and moody psychedelia. My favorite cut, though, is "Happy Birthday, Captain Columbus" by The Philistines Jr., a slaphappy tribute recorded last year for the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage that suggests that Chris & Co. weren't that much different from the Skipper and Gilligan. - Jim T.

THE ABSOLUTE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE (Limited Potential, PO Box 268586, Chicago IL 60626)

SON OF UNCHARTED (March, PO Box 578396, Chicago IL 60657) These two compilations both collect new alternative-rock bands from the Chicago area (*Uncharted* includes groups from throughout the midwest and even one from NJ); both are full of good songs by bands you've probably never heard of, kinda like buying a dozen regional, DIY seven-inches and going exploring. The Limited Potential comp features a few semi-popular groups (Smashing Pumpkins, Rights Of The Accused, New Duncan Imperials) as well new discoveries, like Lonely Trojans and Phantom Helmsman. The most famous band on the *Uncharted* comp is House Of Large Sizes, who have a few obscure records out on Toxic Shock, and a few bands turn up on both discs (including Laughing Man, who gave the same song to both labels). Bands to watch for: Catherine (psychedelic grunge ala' Smashing Pumpkins), Busker Soundcheck (raging pop), Lilacs (power pop), and Phantom Helmsman (garage rock.) Big Hat, one of the Chicago bands with the biggest buzz at the moment, has songs on both comps and both stink. Go figure. - Jim T.

D.U.M.B. ROCK - *The Hollywood Tapes* (Cel-luloid) What do all these bands have in common? They all hail from the Lower East Side, most of the them are pretty ugly and a few of them are pretty old guys to still be playing punk rock, and they've all written goofy, loud, obnoxious, funny punk songs about LaLa Land. Credit Jim Fourniadis, the

poobah of this scene, with putting this thing together - you get Iron Prostate, Sea Monkeys, those psychedelic acid casualties Accidental Potato Chip, Youth Gone Made, and if that wasn't enough, Jim's own band, Rats Of Unusual Size, totally pulverizes "L.A. Woman." Too cool for mere words. - Jim T.

LOUD UGLY POP COMPILATION (Fat Beat, 61 E Columbus St #102, Phoenix AZ 85012) This CD is a three-band compilation; each band does four songs in alternate order. Six sounds like Pegboy. The one singer in Horace Pinker sounds like the singer from the Raging Lamos in New Brunswick. Otherwise, all the bands are happily playing some pop hardcore (Mandingo kinda sounds like Mega City 4.) If you can find this CD, you should pick it up and support their scene, it's pretty cool. - Dave U.

LOVE AND NAPALM (Trance Syndicate, Box 49771, Austin TX 78765) This lp compilation features Ed Hall, Crust, Drain, Johnboy, Cherubs and Pain Teens. All the bands play the same style of music, what a surprise. Most are a cross of industrial to experimental with most of the vocals sounding like they are coming out of a megaphone or something. Not my cup of tea, but if you like this kind of thing, check it out. What, no booklet? - Bob B.

NORTHERN EXPOSURE - Cleveland Music Group sampler (Double CD) - Let's just say that at two hours and a few minutes, this is a hell of a great rock and roll, alternative rock, punk rock and a few other genres double-dose of listening. Some faves: Worm Food, the Waynes, King Of Iowa, Infidels, Moko Bovo, Atomic Punks, Delicate Balance, Jinx, Two Fingers Shy. There are two discs, and while I liked Disc B slightly better (even though it has the only stiff in the bunch, Chunks) both of these CD's are going to get a lot of play at my house. - Rodney L.

ONLY THE STRONG MEMXIII (Victory, PO Box 146546, Chicago IL 60614) This is a great followup to the "Only The Strong" EP that came out a few years ago. This time there are ten bands, all playing hardcore. Each one stands out as an individual unit, something rare with these hc comps. Some of the highlights are Snapcase, Sumthin To Prove, Strife, and Warzone. The CD comes with a booklet and great packaging. Definitely check this out. - Bob B.

SOMEONE'S GONNA GET THEIR HEAD TO BELIEVE IN SOMETHING (BYO, PO Box 67A64, Los Angeles CA 90067)

This CD celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Better Youth Organization, one of the first DIY punk labels and a longtime influence and inspiration for the entire American punk scene. Most of these 31 songs are culled from various BYO compilations over the years, many of them difficult if not impossible to find nowadays, and together they make a great U.S. punk sampler for anyone who wants to check out the history of American hardcore. The Youth Brigade cuts alone are worth the price of the CD, but there are also classic songs by Agression, Battalion of Saints, Social Distortion, the Big Boys, SNFU, Channel 3 and 7 Seconds. The more recent tracks show BYO trying different kinds of music, like Jr. Gone Wild's poppy (pre-Green Day) punk, Royal Crown Revue's ethnic rock, and Youth Brigader Shawn Stern's new band, That's It. A worthwhile addition to your punk rock library. - Jim T.

Fanzines

ANNOYING - 83 Hillcrest Rd, Warren NJ 07059 75 cents - Short punk zine with the usuals - Samiam, zine and show reviews, plus comics and yo yo's. Well, at least that's different!

BLT - 3 Calabar Ct, Gaithersburg MD 20877 \$1 - An entertaining if short 1/2-size zine, done by the same people who publish Blue Blood. The theme this time is employment, the wit is razor sharp, the verdict is that you're better off without a job.

BABY SUE - PO Box 1111, Decatur GA 30031 \$1 - Everything you ever needed to know about yard sales, a 12-point program to personal self-destruction, some comics, some poetry...

BLUE BLOOD - 14207 Chesterfield Rd, Rockville MD 20853 \$22/yr - Kinky erotic fiction, drawings, and photo essays with a punk rock twist. Explicit, so they want an over-18 age statement if you order.

BOWLING FOR DOUGHNUTS #1 - 3809 Princess Anne Rd, Suite 107 Box 105, Virginia Beach VA 23456 \$1 - Punk rock stuff, interviews with Jermiflux and Skankin' Pickle, show reviews, columns.

BRAVE NEW WORLD - Al Barkley, PO Box 252, Newtown RI \$1 - Scenester Al's thoughts on modern society, including a visit to court and some good collage art. He also does Contrast, a punk zine.

CARNAGE #2 - Dan Magelnicki, 151 W 31 St, Bayonne NJ 07002 \$1 - A lot of punkzine usuals (reviews, interviews, photos) plus some vegetarian recipes & a reprint of an advice piece on avoiding date rape.

CHAIRS MISSING - "Straight Line" issue - PO Box 522, Stratford CT 06497 - \$2 - Tsunami, Luna, Gumball, and more penetrating interviews by the perspicacious Scott Munroe. This zine is always a good read and meaty enough for three or four visits to the john.

CHANGE #1 - Patrick West, Trinity College, Hartford CT 06106 \$1 - Jawbox interview, reviews, poetry, letters, columns, photos. I like the attitude, I like that his tastes are eclectic enough to include Jawbox and Disposable Heroes, and I like the self-deprecating humor and the page mocking out MTV superstar Eric "The Body" Nies.

CHAOS TO POWER #7 - Doug Brunell, 39 Sterling Rd, Mt Pocono PA 18344 \$1 - One of those messy anarchist-looking zines, with reviews, interviews, and a bunch of questionnaires filled out by readers.

CHEAP DOUCHEBAG ZINE #1, PO Box 7044, Hollywood FL 33081 \$2 - This is definitely the coolest zine I got all issue. It comes in a plastic bag and along with the zine, you get flyers, stickers, pamphlets, condoms, and little toys. There are band interviews, reviews, stuff on animal rights and vegetarianism, and a great forum-type interview in which nine zine editors discuss the same topics.

CHICKFACTOR #2 - Gail, 245 E 19 St #12T, NYC 10003 \$2 - This looked so nice that I assumed it was from England when I first saw it. From the sepia-toned cover to the clever layouts to the Sassy-style record reviews, the two grrl editors (one in NY, one in D.C.) know their stuff and deliver the goods. Mine came with a free lollipop too. While there's a riot grrl sensibility at work here (Bridget from Unrest and Amelia from Heavenly are saluted as guitar goddesses) there's also plenty of guy bands, stuff about comics, and some arty stuff at the end.

CHUCK - PO Box 6623 Concord CA 94524 \$2 - Ridiculously slim zine for \$2, with three uninteresting short stories and some dopey art. Skip it.

CORE INFERNO #5 - PO Box 144, Hallandale FL 33008 \$2 - Another of those punk-looking zines with really busy pasteups, but there's stuff to read on every page. Reviews, interviews, letters, poetry.

COREGASM #3 - 1136 Lamberton Rd, Trenton NJ 08611 \$1 - Old school hardcore, with Sick Of It All, Agnostic Front, and Refuse To Fall (well, two out of three old schoolers...). Needs more photos or better graphics but the interviews are okay.

DISHWASHER #9 - 1085 I St. #3, Arcata CA 95521 \$1 - One of those personal zines that almost read like someone's diary (this one is even

largely handwritten.) A visit to New Hampshire, some hints on dishwashing, movie reviews and stuff. Enjoyable reading.

DISSONANCE #3 - PO Box 165, Cambridge VT 05444 \$2 - Former Jerseyite moves to Vermont but continues to publish. The emphasis has changed from music to modern survival, with good articles on DIY, guerilla technology, and a great confessional opening editorial. Plus some record reviews. Great desktop layouts look like a cyberpunk manual or something.

ENIGMA #1 - PO Box 2156, Novato CA 94948 \$1.50 - There's been a glut of sex-oriented zines emerging lately and here's yet another, but because the editors of Enigma are teenagers and punk rockers, their take on sex is understandably DIY. Still, some cool graphics effects and some funny pieces, plus a couple of show and record reviews.

EXPLOITATION RETROSPECT #37 - PO Box 1155, Haddonfield NJ 08033 \$2 - Movies and records reviewed, with clean, eye-catching computer layouts and some good writing.

FURTHER TOO - Craig John Wilson, 168 Elm Grove, Brighton, E Sussex U.K. BN2 3DA 4 IRC's - The cover says it all: "Pop, sex, football, culture, tv." I like the way "culture" and "tv" are two different things. Still, the parts about music are the best. Also a British view of the riot grrl phenomenon (which is getting huge press over there.)

GANGSTERS IN DRAG - Useless Press, PO Box 413, Bristol TN 37621 \$1 - JB contributor Greg Matherly's little zine, a forum for self-expression including his own story of a run-in with the local cops, poetry, and artwork.

GENETIC DISORDER #9 - PO Box 151362, San Diego CA 92175 \$2 - The cover is a funny takeoff on Ben Is Dead, announcing that this is the "Themeless Issue." Some San Diego news and gossip, band interviews, reviews. Nice layouts, lots of photos. Good job.

GREEDY BASTARD #7 - PO Box 1014, Yonkers NY 10704 \$1 - The only fanzine reviewed this issue that's shaped like a penis. This is by Bill from Bugout Society, and is largely his response to the riot grrl thing, which if you know anything about Bugout Society tells you this is going to be crude, irreverent, funny, and full of cheap shots. Which it is. There's also a page of recipes for things you can do with White Castles (besides throw them at people at shows.)

GRIND - 25791 Parada Dr, Valencia CA 91355 \$2 - The first half of this reads like someone's term paper on modern socialism. Then there's some vegetarian propaganda, scene reports, an interview with the long-defunct Sons Of Ishmael, poetry, a short story, and video reviews.

JAUNDICE #3 - Ayleen, PO Box 1414, Barrington IL 60011 \$1 - The editor of Jaundice responded to Jersey Beat by saying, "well, it doesn't have any recipes or poetry," but heck, she was still in high school at the time. This has plenty of poetry, short stories, some personal musings, and an interview with someone who's apparently addicted to Chapstick. No recipes, though.

JELLYBEAN ZINE #1 - 113 Fleetwood Ln, Minoa NY 13116 \$1 - Big messy punkzine with the usuals. Bone Club, Into Another, Affirmative Action, WORM, plus "more reviews than you can shake a banana at."

KNUCKLE SANDWICH #3 - 2106 Stirrup Ln, Alexandria VA 22308 \$1 - The most politically incorrect zine from the D.C. scene, editor Matt has a vicious sense of humor (and a unique panache with run-on sentences) and you really need to read this, trust me.

MURTAUGH #9 - 137 Emerson Pl, Brooklyn NY 11205 \$1 - Except for a page of record reviews, this is a punk rock look at baseball. And not even really baseball, but baseball fandom. Lots of fun, especially the resident riot grrl column.

MUSIC FROM THE LEDGE #2 - PO Box 9284, Wilmington DE 19809 \$1 - At the Philadelphia Music Conference described elsewhere in this issue, I sat on a panel and made a fool of myself by talking about how I do this zine because I love it, while everyone else on the panel talked about they were only in publishing to make lots of money. As I was walking from the room, some heavy-set geezer with a big Santa Claus

beard named "The Tink" introduced himself and said, "I'm just like you. I do it 'cuz I love it." Then he gave me this zine. And you know what? We're right, they're wrong.

NO LONGER A FANZINE #3 - Joseph Gervasi, 142 Frankford Ave, Blackwood NJ 08012 \$2 - Really good issue with author Dennis Cooper, Matt from Outpunk, stuff on sex, comics, travel, and music. Lots of pages, lots of good reading.

OVERTIME - Randy Larsen, PO Box 185, Putnam CT 06260 \$1 - Halfsize straightedge zine with lots of photos (but they're xeroxed, not screened) and interviews with Downcast and Oversight.

PANIC BUTTON #1 - PO Box 62, Prospect Hts IL 60070 \$2 - Ben Weasel had some time between world tours so he put together this zine. There's a history of Chicagoland's punk scene, a bunch of punkers give their baseball picks for the season (I'm changing my pick in the AL East, Ben. Yankees all the way!), and there's a preview of what I suspect will be Mr. Weasel's first novel. If you're into Ben's MRR columns, you'll get off on his sarcastic attitude, which is in rare form here.

PARANOID #1 - % Chickenhead-WRHU, 1000 Fulton Ave, Hempstead NY 11550 \$1 - Tongue-in-cheek minizine done by a couple of Long Island scenesters who do a radio show, play in bands, and use phony names in this zine. And if one of them doesn't send me the video he owes me soon, we'll let everyone know who they are next issue. Band stuff, reviews, lots of bullshit. Kinda funny, especially if you understand all the Long Island HC in-jokes.

PUNK #5 - Rick Seger, 2163 43rd Ave, San Francisco CA 94116 \$2 - The Look magazine of punk, published on legal-sized paper and full of photos, most of them taken at Gilman Street. If you like photos of punk rock bands (and I do,) Rick's got plenty of really good ones for you to peruse.

RAPID FIRE MAGAZINE #10 - RD2 Box 3370, Bristol VT 05443 \$2 - I've said it before and I'll say it again, people in Vermont are weird. There's a mind boggling range of music in this zine, from pieces on riot grl faves like Velocity Girl and Swirlies to an essay on the time someone never got to the big Emerson, Lake & Palmer concert. Plenty to read, lots of photos (a bit blurry due to the desktop presentation,) and reviews.

RAVEN #3 - PO Box 295, Schertz TX 78154 \$1 - Punk rock zine with the usuals. Firehose and Ed Hall are interviewed, there's poetry, reviews, a dumb story. The layouts need a little work.

SANITY SUX #17 - Kim Martin, 3754 Kimberly Dr, Gainesville GA 30506 \$2 - The layouts live up to the title, you have to keep turning the zine from side to side to read it and it's all pretty chaotic. Mostly music stuff with a lot of short interviews, reader survey, and reviews that read like

passages from a diary, they're so intensely personal. They also stole a photo of Ween from one of our back issues but since they gave us credit, they're welcome to it!

SCRAPE #8 - 8601 SW 40 St #132, Miami FL 33155 \$2 - Well done punk zine out of Florida with really nice layouts, good photos, and well written reviews. This issue features Florida legends the Pink Lincolns, Fugazi, and a Miami scene report.

SECOND GUESS #6 - PO Box 9382, Reno NV 89507 \$2 - One of my favorite half-size zines. This issue has a bit of a Cometbus influence since there's a lot of travel diaries, plus a Green Day interview and the usuals.

SHOELACE #4 - PO Box 7952, Trenton NJ 08628 \$2 - This always looks like four different people did the layouts, but it's always good reading. This issue has a bunch of interviews, columns by Bob Conrad and Joseph Gervasi, reviews, and cool art.

SKY FLYING BY #3 - 2308 Londonderry Dr, Murfreesboro TN 37129 \$2 - Despite the address, this is a Boston zine with the punk usuals: Animal rights and veggie stuff, "Top Ten Grossest Things," show reviews, Gravel interview, and something about caffeine addiction.

SOMETHING SMELLS - PO Box 20161, Barrie Ontario L4M 6H2 Canada \$2 - Hole, Sheer Terror, Superchunk... at least his tastes aren't predictable! Kinda cool that a DIY punks scene in the boondocks like this could score a pretty good Helmet interview at this stage of the game. Record reviews, photos.

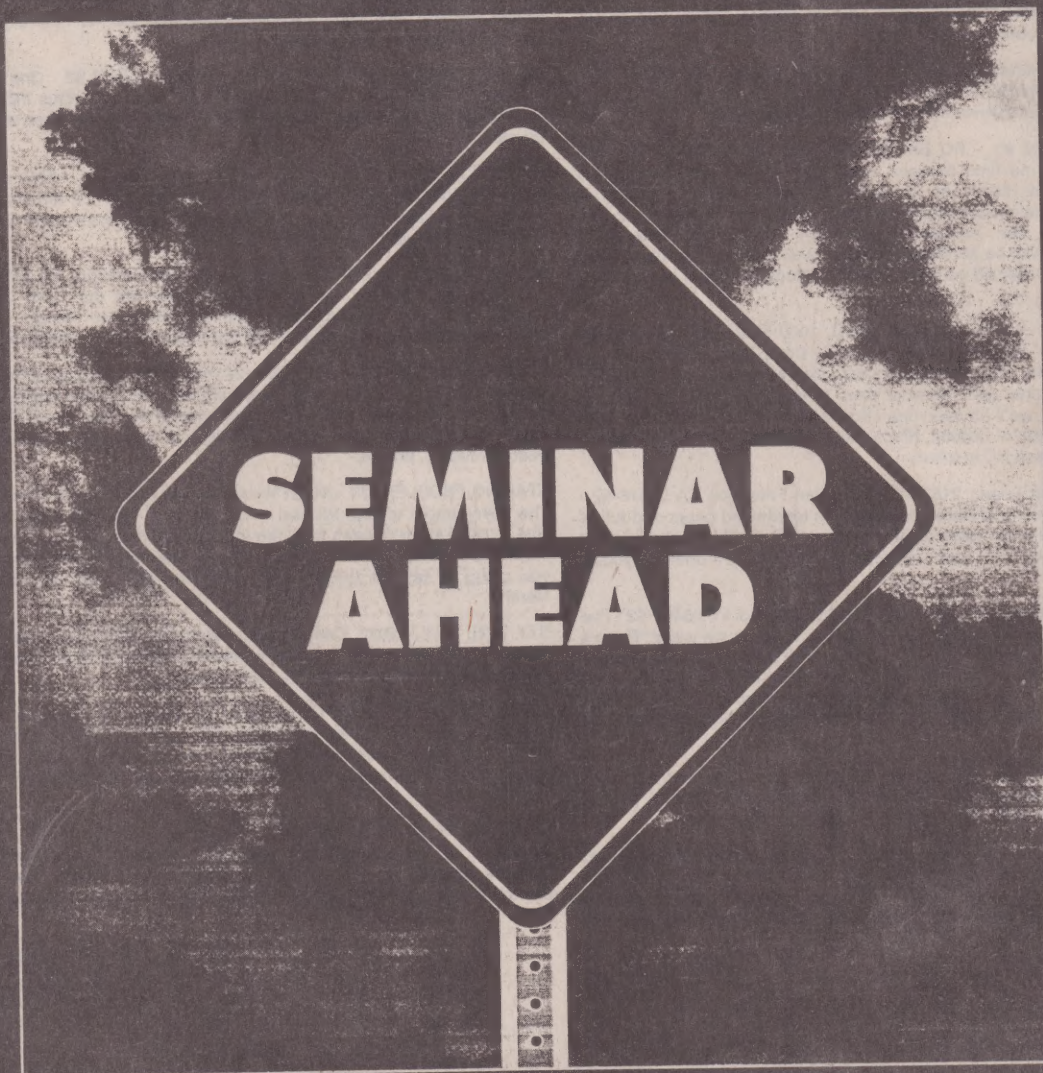
STARING PROBLEM #3 - 244 N Westmore #1, Lombard IL 60148 \$1 - The cover photo of Ben Weasel in the nude is the best thing in this zine. Lots of show reviews from the late, great Chicago-area punk club McGregors and a Screeching Weasel interview. Hey, Shane, when are you going to send in the reviews for all that shit I sent you back in March?

STY ZINE #11 - 5021 Central Ave, Indpls IN 46205 50 cents or 2 stamps - A weird compilation of different stuff. Short stories, newspaper reprints, zine reviews, collage art, skate photos.

TWISTWORTHY #7 - 4050 Cypressdale Dr, Spring TX 77388 \$2 - Half zine punk zine but a little better than most. This one has two great features, a long Econochrist interview and a pull-out "Twistworthy Prayer Rug" so you can pray to the editor and get everything you ever wanted.

VIRAL PRESS #2 - Matt Kelly, 4440 Ambrose Ave #209, Los Angeles CA 90027 \$2 - Alternating fiction and band interviews. Record reviews. A funny editorial on the Clinton pot-smoking conspiracy. The best piece is the Gregg Turner interview. Lots to read, and all well written.





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